

APPLICATION

Study field "Information and Communication Sciences" for assessment

Study field	<i>Information and Communication Sciences</i>
Title of the higher education institution	<i>Rīgas Stradiņa universitāte</i>
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Self-evaluation report

Study field "Information and Communication Sciences"

Rīga Stradiņš University

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I - Information on the Higher Education Institution/College

1.1. Basic information on the higher education institution/ college and its strategic development directions, including the following information:

Rīga Stradiņš University (RSU) is a state-established higher education and science institution under the supervision of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Latvia and has been closely integrated into the state healthcare system already since 1950. On 15 April 2002, RSU was registered with the Register of Higher Education Institutions, registration No. 3341702042. On 13 December 2001, RSU was accredited. RSU is the third largest university in Latvia with a pronounced international orientation - about 25% of all RSU students are international students.

For three consecutive years, RSU has been acknowledged as the highest education institution of the highest quality with the best reputation in Latvia with the highest rating among the nine largest higher education institutions in Latvia. Such a conclusion resulted from the research on reputation of Latvian higher education institutions conducted by research company *Kantar TNS* at the beginning of 2019.

The **vision** of RSU is to be a modern and prestigious university recognised in Europe and across the world, with human as the main value and which provides high-quality and exportable research-based higher education. The **mission** of RSU is to prepare specialists of high quality in the field of healthcare and social sciences for Europe and the world, so that the knowledge, skills, competence and attitude obtained during the studies corresponds to the highest EU requirements and humanistic traditions and the studies create a stable basis for life-long education.

RSU implements 10 study directions (StD) (data as of September 2019):

- "Healthcare" (30 study programmes (StP));
- "Life Sciences" (1 StP);
- "Information and Communication Science" (8 StP);
- "Education, Pedagogy and Sport" (2 StP);
- "Social Welfare" (3 StP);
- "Sociology, Political Science, Anthropology" (10 StP);
- "Law" (4 StP);
- "Management, Administration and Management of Real Estate" (6 StP);
- "Psychology" (3 StP)
- "Internal Security and Civil Defence" (1 StP).

31 StPs are implemented within the directions of healthcare and life sciences, 37 StPs are implemented in eight study directions of social sciences, including the Internal Security and Civil Defence study direction (1 StP) established in 2016, which, alongside with the Law study direction, has been implemented by the RSU Faculty of Law and has been accredited in 2019 for 6 years.

RSU has one branch in Liepāja. The Liepāja Branch has lecture rooms and study premises with the total area of 2,816 m², set out in two buildings in Liepāja, Rīņķu iela 24/26 and are fully adapted to the needs of the university. Auditoriums and lecture rooms are equipped with modern equipment, ensuring high-quality study process, including online lectures.

The StP management approach implemented by RSU has promoted the provision of StP offer that is of high quality and relevant to industries as shown by the growing number of applicants and students in the study directions implemented by RSU (see Table 1, Figures 1, 2), especially

considering the circumstances of the demographic crisis and decrease in the total number of applicants in Latvia. In academic year 2018/2019, the total number of students at RSU was 8,716 (data as of autumn semester, academic year 2019/2020).

Table 1. Number of students in the study directions implemented by RSU over the last six academic years

Direction	Academic year					
	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019
Healthcare	4,911	4,864	5,285	5,652	6,043	6,222
Law	986	1,133	1,139	1,105	1,084	993
Management, Administration and Management of Real Estate	203	200	207	225	226	243
Education, Pedagogy and Sport	202	234	236	232	228	235
Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology	243	210	234	227	230	252
Social Welfare	121	107	138	146	126	143
Information and Communication Science	587	523	428	396	369	397
Psychology	71	98	66	111	121	143
Life Sciences	11	7	6	6	6	6
Internal Security and Civil Defence	0	0	0	0	45	82
In total	7,335	7,376	7,739	8,100	8,478	8,716

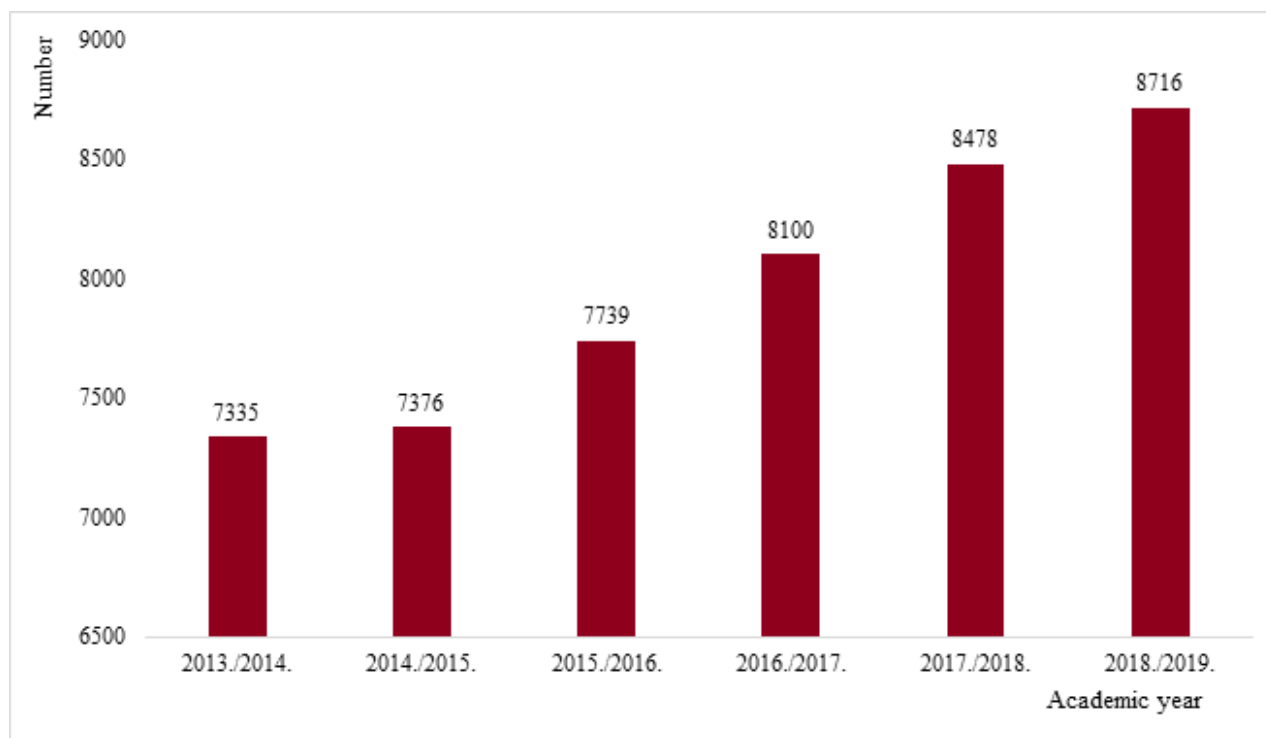


Figure 1. Total number of students in the study directions implemented by RSU over the last six academic years

RSU Development Strategy 2017-2021 is available on the RSU website in [Latvian and English](#). The main development objectives of RSU are innovative studies in a contemporary environment and research of health, wildlife and humanities, including social responsibility for sustainable development of the university and society, twinning for integration in the labour market and internationalisation and reputation for international recognition. RSU strategy provides for progress towards a modern education system compliant with the requirements of future labour market.

The development of RSU's StPs is based on the following principles:

- integrity of research and placement;
- modernisation of the study process (digitisation, introduction of innovations, simulation-based learning approach, etc.) for effective achievement of learning outcomes;
- promotion of academic integrity;
- cooperation and sharing of resources with local and foreign higher education institutions (HEIs);
- development of interdisciplinary cooperation of industries with professional organisations;
- compliance of StPs with the development of the national economy and industries;
- promotion of the export capability of higher education and science;
- cooperation between higher education institutions in the implementation of StPs, combining resources for extending the study, research and innovation potential;
- monitoring of the quality of studies and activities for targeted improvement.

See Annex No. 13.2. for the awards, collaboration with schools, and marketing activities of RSU.

1.2. Description of the management of the higher education institution/ college, the main

institutions involved in the decision-making process, their composition (percentage depending on the position, for instance, the academic staff, administrative staff members, students), and the powers of these institutions.

Activity of RSU is regulated by the Law on the Constitution of Rīga Stradiņš University, Law on Institutions of Higher Education, as well as other external and internal laws and regulations. Decision-making of RSU is ensured by the Constitutional Assembly, Senate, Rector and Academic Arbitration Court. The said laws and regulations define the powers and duties of each institution.

The RSU Constitutional Assembly consists of 130 employees, 78 (60%) of whom are academic staff, 26 (20%) – administrative staff, and 26 (20%) – student representatives.

The RSU Senate has 24 members, including 12 from the group of professors and associate professors, six from the rest of the academic staff, five student representatives and one administrative staff member.

Efficient management and supervision of operational tasks are carried out by RSU's four Vice-Rectors: Vice-Rector for Health Studies, Vice-Rector for Studies, Vice-Rector for Administration and Development, Vice-Rector for Science, and their subordinate units of studies, science, administration and management.

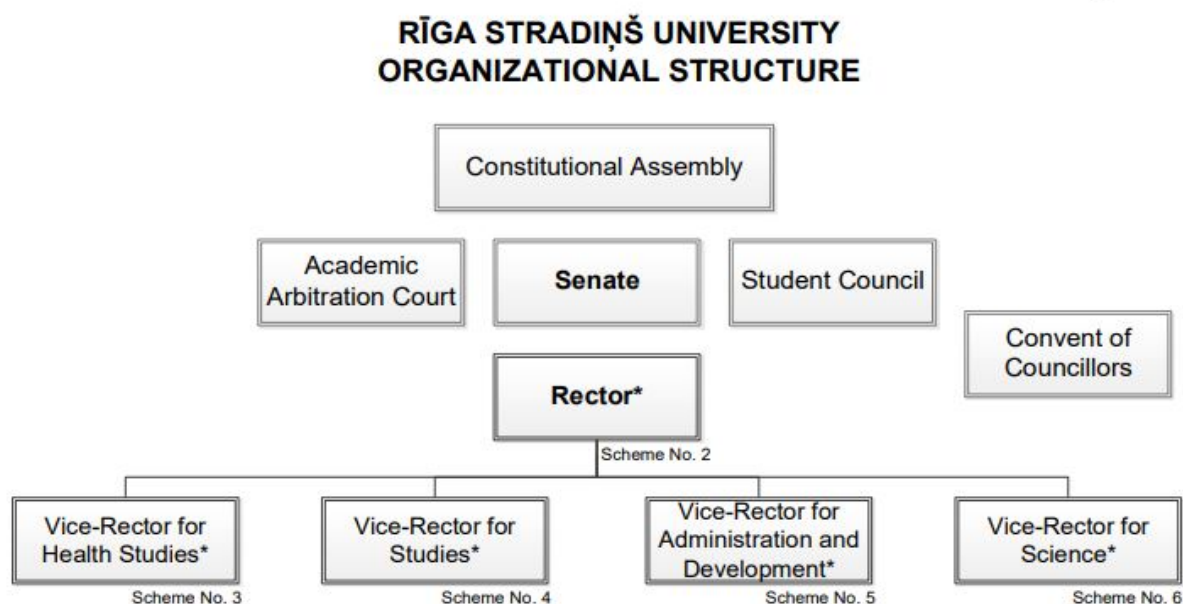


Figure 2. Riga Stradiņš university subordination structure scheme

Participation of External Partners in Decision-Making

Participation of external partners in the RSU Convent of Councillors, Alumni Association, Study Quality Councils (SQC) and faculty / department meetings.

Foreign and local specialists of various industries take part in the RSU Convent of Councillors as external partners. The Convent of Councillors consults the Senate and the Rector on the matters of RSU development strategy in order to promote development of RSU by determining strategic directions of its activity in accordance with the needs of the national economy. The Convent of Councillors meets approximately four times a year and deals with current issues of RSU. Current issues for consideration may be raised by any [member of the Convent](#) during the meetings. For example, at the June 2019 meeting, the issue of the RSU's plans for the development and

improvement of social study programmes was considered, with emphasis on improving interdisciplinary studies and research. During the meeting, the views of faculty leaders on the research potential of study programmes were presented, as well as the views and recommendations of the participants of the Convent of Councillors on the improvement and adaptation of study programmes were discussed.

The composition of the SQC includes employers. The Council evaluates compliance of the study programme content with the requirements of the laws and regulations of Latvia and the EU, public interests and requirements of the labour market, as well as the long-term development of the respective study direction. See Clause 1.4 of this section for more information on the SQC activities.

Councils of some faculties include employers. Composition of the faculty council is approved by the Senate based on a proposal by the faculty's dean.

The Alumni Association brings together alumni of various ages who graduated from former Riga Medical Institute, Medical Academy of Latvia, and RSU. The Alumni Association is the contact point for alumni, students, academic staff, and industry representatives. Cooperation between the parties involved is important for the improvement of the quality of studies and research, for the development of the field, and for the purposeful orientation of students' professional activities. The association promotes involvement of RSU alumni in lifelong learning activities.

Participation of Students in the Management Process

The Student Union (SU) represents the interests of the students at the Constitutional Assembly, Academic Arbitration Court, the Senate, faculty councils, Ethics Committee, Credit Grant Committee, Scholarship Grant Committee, Library Council, Museum Council, Rectorate, Dean's Council, Study Quality Council, and Committee for Recognition of Learning Outcomes Achieved in Prior Education or Professional Experience. Student representatives have a veto right at the faculty councils; rights of deferring veto at the Senate in relation to matters affecting student interests.

International student interests at RSU are represented by the International Students' Association.

The Student Union cooperates with the International Students' Association, ensuring that interests of both the Latvian and international students are represented in the management process.

The RSU Student Union (RSU SU) was established in 1993, and it has been operating for more than 25 years already in order to represent the interests of students in the matters of academic, material and cultural life at the university and other state institutions; it represents the students of the higher education institution in Latvia and abroad, lays down the procedure for students to be elected in collegial institutions of the higher education institution.

The Student Union is financed from the budget of the higher education institution to such amount that is not less than one two-hundredth from the annual budget of the higher education institution. At the end of each calendar year, the RSU SU presents to the RSU management the budget use of the current year and the budget planning for the following calendar year, which is accepted by the Rector. See Annex No. 5.2 for more information on the content of the SU activity.

Participation of Structural Units in Decision-Making

Based on the developed medium-term strategy, the management of RSU annually approves the action plan and delegates specific objectives to the structural units. In order to achieve these objectives, each RSU structural unit has to plan its own resources during the annual budget

planning session, requesting the funds necessary to achieve the delegated objectives. Along with the development of a detailed budget, responsibilities are clearly separated because the structural units have to operate within the framework of the approved budgets. Working groups, discussions, and brainstorming sessions are being set up to implement new projects, processes, and innovations, thus maximizing the involvement of employees and direct managers in decision-making.

See Annex No. 1 for the list of internal laws and regulations in accordance with the primary activity processes of RSU.

See RSU structural scheme in Annex No. 3 (available also on the website in [Latvian](#) and [English](#)).

See Annex No. 23. Compliance of the study programme with Part I of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

Information about the Structural Units Involved in the Implementation of the Study Programme and the Required Support Staff

In order to ensure academic activity and study quality, study support personnel is employed by academic structural units who ensure servicing of students, circulation of documents, providing support to academic staff. Depending on type of the structural unit and the study courses taught, training support personnel positions are planned by the head of the structural unit, but the general principles at RSU are developed and maintained by the Human Resources Department.

Responsibility areas of the support personnel in accordance to the respective position are support to study process and methodological work, support to research and clinical work, support to the department office work etc., as needed.

Heads of departments at the structural unit ensure involvement of qualified academic and scientific staff for the implementation of studies. Promote growth and renewal of academic and scientific staff. Ensure operation of the internal quality control system of the study process in the structural unit. Participate in the development of study programmes, study courses and quality assessment. Ensure development and updating of study course descriptions, development of necessary documentation.

Heads of study programmes ensure quality of the study programme. Improve the content by following the development of the sector. Ensure performance of quality indicators of the study programme. Involve visiting lecturers, implement international projects. Analyse assessment questionnaires completed by students, provide feedback, and implement changes. Prepare the description of the study programme for accreditation and annual StP reviews. Promote students' scientific research activity. Organise examinations of semesters and examination periods. Promote performance indicators in the management of the study programme. Promote the continuity of study courses.

Office managers at the departments organise and supervise the work of study support personnel in order to ensure efficient support to the work of the structural unit. Provide information about the students, study results, study programmes, academic staff in electronic systems and databases. Prepare various reports on the study process of the department. Ensure technical support to training auditoriums. Perform other tasks of the direct manager.

Office administrators at the departments work with the provision of information, prepare various reports as commissioned by the managers. Provide information about the students, study results, study programmes, academic staff in electronic systems and databases. Organise the flow of visitors at the structural unit. Ensure the training rooms with the visual aids and technical

equipment necessary for the work process.

1.3. Description of the mechanism for the implementation of the quality policy and the procedures for the assurance of the quality of higher education, as well as the stakeholders involved in the development and improvement of the quality assurance system and their role in these processes.

RSU Quality Policy is based on the strategy and values of the university and includes three basic principles: student-focused approach, partnership, and quality. The Quality Policy is available on the RSU website [in Latvian](#) and [in English](#). Both the staff and students of RSU are involved in the implementation of the Quality Policy. In general, study quality assurance is a multi-level system (see Figure 3).

The duty of the RSU senior management is to set strategic and quality goals and quality policy, to make a decision on quality approach, to manage resources, and determine the internal procedures. The principles for maintaining the RSU quality management system are set out in the Quality Manual (see Annex No. 1), which is available to all employees in the RSU Document Management System. The quality system introduced at RSU is supervised by internal system and quality auditors, and independent external experts. At the university level, one of the indicators of study quality is the public attitude and opinion, as well as the popularity of RSU. Evaluating the level of RSU staff satisfaction and engagement as well as the results of the university reputation survey, guidelines are set to strengthen the image of RSU.

At the study programme level, the duty of the head of the study programme is to ensure compliance of the content of the study programme with internal and external laws and regulations, requirements of the labour market, sectoral development trends, and needs of students, to analyse data that might provide information on factors affecting results and quality of the study programmes, and to implement necessary improvements to the study programmes. Quality indicators of study programmes that are directly linked to the remuneration of the heads of the study programmes are measured annually. This aspect promotes taking responsibility and motivates the heads of the study programmes to achieve higher defined quality standards.

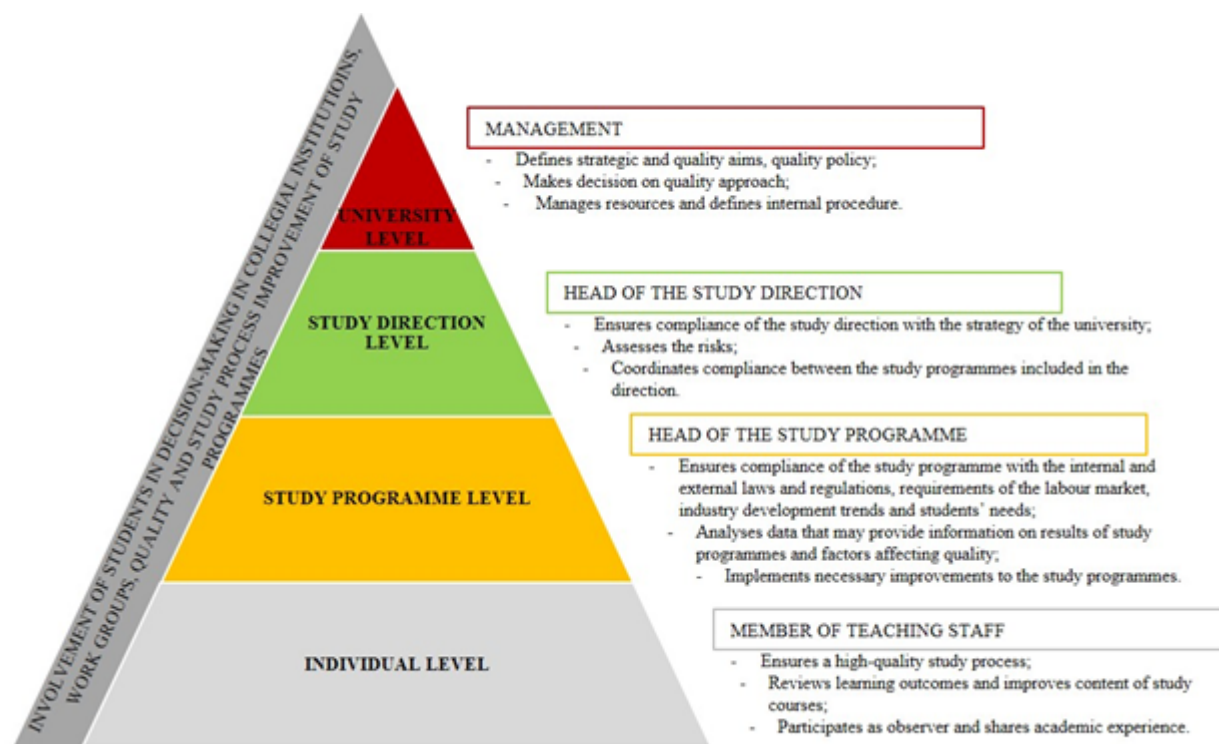


Figure 3. RSU quality assurance.

Supervision of the system introduced by RSU is performed by both the internal system and quality auditors and independent external experts.

External and internal ((available from: <https://www.rsu.lv/en/students/documents>) laws and regulations governing student achievements and evaluation of learning outcomes:

- Law on Institutions of Higher Education;
- Education Law;
- Academic Regulations I - regulations of undergraduate and Master's studies (available in [Latvian](#) and in [English](#));
- Academic Regulations III - regulations of Doctoral studies (available in [Latvian](#) and in [English](#));
- Regulations on the development and presentation of the qualification paper, student's research paper, Bachelor's thesis and Master's thesis (in [Latvian](#) and [English](#));
- See Process Description No. 6 "Assessment and Submission of Learning Outcomes" etc. in Annex No. 1.

Student performance is analysed twice per academic year after the end of the study semester. As a result of performance monitoring, risks to successful study process are identified as well as for the reasons for exclusion, on the basis of which it is possible to perform preventive actions.

In 2016, RSU performed an international external assessment of the implementation of student-centred learning approach performed by the group of assessment experts of project "Peer Assessment of Student Centred Learning" (PASCL). Report of PASCL experts on the implementation of student-centred approach at RSU is available both in [English](#) and in [Latvian](#). It was an EU-level project promoted by the European Students' Union in cooperation with other European higher education organisations, whereas the visit of experts in Riga was initiated by the RSU Student Union. RSU is one of the few higher education institutions in Europe that accepted an institutional decision to be involved and was elected within the framework of the PASCL project.

A condition of the project was to include some structural units of the higher education institution in the assessment. Prior to the visit, RSU prepared a self-assessment report describing the structure of

the University, statistical data of operation, decision-making institutions and involved representatives, involvement of students in the implementation and improvement of the content and processes. During the visit in Riga, experts met with the representatives of RSU management, administrative structural units, and Student Union, as well as with students, deans, and lecturers.

The expert opinion described RSU as a student-centred higher education institution that actively involves students in the improvement of the study process. The report also includes recommendations for further facilitation of student involvement in the study process and general institutional improvement of the understanding and implementation of a student-centred approach at all levels. Taking into account the recommendations of PASCL experts, RSU has:

- improved internal quality monitoring processes, such as implementation of quantitative and qualitative student feedback, identification and evaluation of study programme quality indicators;
- improved functionality of the e-studies environment;
- updated learning outcome assessment approach, types of examinations and content thereof;
- promoted the efficiency of internal communication and strengthened cooperation with external partners, employers, etc.

Based on the positive assessment of RSU in the project, examples of good practice, and attitude aimed at cooperation, RSU was selected as a partner in the development of a successive project application.

1.4. Fill in the table on the compliance of the internal quality assurance system of the higher education institution/ college with the provisions of Section 5, Paragraph 21 of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education by providing a justification for the given statement. In addition, it is also possible to refer to the respective chapter of the Self-Assessment Report, where the provided information serves as evidence for the full compliance, partial compliance or non-compliance.

1.	The higher education institution/ college has established a policy and procedures for assuring the quality of higher education.	<p>Complies</p> <p>The RSU has an established policy and procedures for assuring the quality of higher education which is prescribed by the internal regulatory documents. These documents are described in Section I, Paragraph 1.3 and Section II, Paragraph 2 of the Description and determine the quality mechanisms of the study process for the RSU and are applicable to complete all study programmes.</p>
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2.	A mechanism for the creation and internal approval of the study programmes of the higher education institution/ college, as well as the supervision of their performance and periodic inspection thereof has been developed.	Complies
		<p>The RSU has a developed mechanism for the creation and internal approval of the study programmes of the higher education institution, as well as the supervision of their performance and periodic inspection thereof. The mechanism is described in detail in Section II, Paragraph 2.2 and is applicable to completely all study programmes. It is supervised by CEG, and at the same time it also conducts improvements of the system, provides support to the heads of the study programmes and directions in this process taking into account its experience within the framework of the competence. The example is the study programmes which have been developed within the framework of SAM and have been described here.</p> <p>Upgrading and the development of the study programmes have been implemented upon drafting the strategy and annual plans of the Faculty of Communication. The real process has been discussed at the meetings of the Study Quality Committee, while major decisions have been taken at the meeting of the Council of the Faculty of Communication. The process of the development of study programmes has been constantly monitored by analysing students' academic performance, number, drop-out, technical facilities, assessment, academic staff's quality and other essential indicators.</p>
3.	The criteria, conditions, and procedures for the evaluation of students' results, which enable reassurance of the achievement of the intended learning outcomes, have been developed and made public.	<p>Complies</p> <p>For the criteria, conditions, and procedures for the evaluation of students' results, which enable reassurance of the achievement of the intended learning outcomes, see Section II, Paragraph 1.6.</p>
4.	Internal procedures and mechanisms for assuring the qualifications of the academic staff and the work quality have been developed.	Complies
		<p>Internal procedures and mechanisms for assuring the qualifications of the academic staff and the work quality have been described in Section II, Paragraph 3.5. Each year compliance assessment is conducted, and the mechanisms are reviewed.</p>

5.	The higher education institution/ college ensures the collection and analysis of the information on the study achievements of the students, employment of the graduates, satisfaction of the students with the study programme, efficiency of the work of the academic staff, the study funds available, and the disbursements thereof, as well as the key performance indicators of the higher education institution/ college.	<p>Complies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ See the information on student results in Section I Paragraph 1.3; ☐ See the information on student employment in Annex No. 10. and Section I Paragraph 1.2, Section II Paragraph 1.1, 2.2, 3.7, 4.1 ☐ More information on graduate feedback mechanisms can be found in Section II Paragraph 2.2. and the StP description in Paragraph 2.6. ☐ See the information on student and graduate satisfaction with the study programme in Section 2.2 and Annex No. 21.2, 21.2. ☐ See the information on the efficiency of the academic staff in Section 3.5. ☐ See the information on available study aids and their costs, see Section 3.1. <p>See the information on the essential indicators of the higher education institution's activities in Paragraph 1.1, 1.2, 1.3.</p>
6.	The higher education institution/ college shall ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study direction whilst implementing their quality assurance systems.	<p>Complies</p> <p>While implementing the quality assurance systems, the higher education institution guarantees continuous improvement, development and efficient performance of the study direction, as described in Section I, Paragraph 1.4, Section II, Paragraph 2. See Section I Paragraph 1.4, Section II Paragraph 2.</p>

II - Description of the Study Direction (1. Management of the Study Direction)

1.1. Economic and/or social grounds for the creation of the study direction and the relevant study programmes, the assessment of the interrelation among the study programmes, as well as the analysis of the significance (singularity) of the study programmes in comparison with other similar study programmes in Latvia and abroad.

[Forecasts of employment trends](#) in the European Union (Cedefop) show that Latvia will see a 10% increase in employment in the information and communication field by 2025.

As the data in this report show, there is a stable need for educated management and public relations professionals in the labour market. In all study programmes, the content is created and developed in cooperation with employers (placement providers), as well as with the participation of representatives of the quality council of the study direction. Placement reports and discussions with employers show that employers highly value the knowledge, skills, competences, and motivation of students and graduates of the study programme.

The habits of using media and information technologies in Latvian society, changes in the environment and culture of public communication^[1] also require the content of the study programmes in communication science to be transformed. For example, Bachelor's study programmes of the study direction include a study course called Student Media, which provides opportunities to develop practical skills and creative ideas during studies; several courses on Critical Thinking in Journalism have been developed in the Journalism Methods and Genres study course; Analysis of Communication Situations study course has been introduced to the Master's study programme Communication and Media Studies, which analyses current communication problems, such as interaction of media policy and society, development of media literacy, peculiarities of the communication of populism.

Research on the perspectives of specific areas of higher education shows that social and so-called soft skills - communication skills, ability to gather and understand information, creativity in content creation, critical thinking skills, skills of collaboration and networking, teamwork skills, ability to work in a multicultural environment and others (for example, Human Resources or Forbes) will be highly valued along with the hard knowledge and will ensure development in the future professional environment.<https://www.humanresourcesonline.net/world-economic-forum-on-the-top-10-skills-and-workforce-strategies-in-2020/><https://www.forbes.com/sites/elleivate/2018/08/06/the-skills-you-need-to-succeed-in-2020/> - 15ed8b7f288a Taking into account these and other changes in the social environment, technological development, transformation of higher education, content and process updates are consistently introduced in the study programs of the study direction. They are possible because students, lecturers, and representatives of communication and other fields are regularly involved in the development of the study programmes.

The placement providers and employers of the future graduates of the study programme regularly participate in the implementation of the study programme of the study direction as lecturers and guest lecturers; the existing employers study in Master's study programmes in order to improve their knowledge. This is also evidenced by the tendency that the number of students receiving the second or third Master's degree in the Master's study programmes of the study direction is increasing because they want to acquire new knowledge and modernise their education.

Analyses and forecasts of the labour market development show that, despite the popularity of social science study programmes and the possible overproduction of employees with such education, graduates of RSU study direction Information and Communication Science have a stable niche in the future labour market in Latvia and Europe. Firstly, better prospects for employees with a higher level of education are projected. Secondly, with the increasing use of technology-mediated communication tools in different areas of life, including working life, such as public administration and system management, services, education, culture, etc., there will be a growing demand for staff with communication and (digital) media skills, knowledge and a general understanding of the specifics of digital and media communication. Thirdly, the development of communication field is parallel to economic development; it is highly correlated with economic development (digital communication and digital media, e-services (e-state, e-municipality, etc.), digital business, advertising, public relations, strategic and crisis communication, behavioural economics, integrated marketing communication, social media) and ensures transparency, stabilisation and order in various social spheres (journalism), thus development both in the context of changing staff and new skills required is also indirectly predictable here. Studies by researcher of the [University of Latvia](#) Dr. econ. prof. E. Kasalis, Dr. econ. asoc. prof. E. Brēķis, Dr. econ. asoc. prof. S. Jēkabsone, Dr. econ. lecturer K. Purmalis in the field of labour market, for example, show that employees will be required with new skills in the field of communication and interaction, especially in the work with new technologies, which largely corresponds to the profile of specialists prepared in the study

programme. The need for new skills, knowledge and competences and a new workforce in the field of communication and media, as well as in social communication and advertising, is not denied by other studies commissioned by public authorities, such as the State Employment Agency's Overview of the Unemployment Situation in the Country or Information Report of the Ministry of Economics on Medium and Long-Term Labour Market Forecasts, [Economic developments of Latvia \(2019\)](#).

Uniqueness of the study direction programmes is described by the following indicators:

- **The goal:** to adapt the content of a study programme in a concentrated way to the specific professional area or research branch, for example, in information and communication science, while emphasising mediated communication; the content is unique because it offers study courses that are not available in other similar study programmes, especially in the area of visual communication; ambitions in developing the study programme is to respond to the media and communication sector;
- **Employers and graduates of the study programmes of the direction are involved in the creation of the study content;**
- Study structure which combines academic knowledge (theory) and practical skills, as well as develops creative activity (creative course and study final papers) and research;
- Organisation of studies in the form of modules determining a concentrated and dynamic study process in which a student can simultaneously learn various study courses and independently use equipment and technologies of multimedia studies, student medium options and other digital communication equipment and technologies, including appropriate IT software for development of creative and research papers.

Graduates of each study programme of the direction work in a field relevant to their studies, set up their own businesses or continue their education, mostly in the existing and emerging professions of public communication. Graduates of the Journalism study programme work in the media and on websites as social media communication creators. Graduates of the Public Relations study programme work in private companies as PR specialists, in non-governmental organizations and in public administration - as press secretaries and PR managers. A comprehensive description of [employment prospects](#) is available in the Post-Graduate section of the academic programme Public Relations. Graduates of the Multimedia Communication study programme work in the field of multimedia content production (video, web content, infographics) or in event management.

Employer surveys show that the Photography study programme contributes to the field of Latvian information and communication sciences in the following way: Historically, there have never been any study programmes in Latvia in undergraduate education that deal with the theoretical and practical aspects of photographic media in communication. The new study programme has made an invaluable contribution to the training of professionals who are familiar with the principles of photography media, the specifics of application of photography in the commercial and art sectors, media economics, relation of photography to the creative industries, have studied theoretically and practically the theory and history of photography and communication, basics of media management, interactions of photography and other media in historical and contemporary terms, the use of photography on the Internet, in the press, advertising and the arts; and are able to independently study and forecast current trends in the use of photography and professionally manage and implement the production of various photographs. These and other data have been used to supplement the range of study programmes in the study direction with media literacy, visual and multimedia communication programmes (for example, Bachelor's study programme Photography, Master's study programme Health Communication, doctoral study programme Communication Culture and Multimedia).

According to the data of the State Employment Agency, the number of unemployed persons among these persons who have acquired this type of higher education is below the average level.

Improvement of the content and structure of the study direction at the strategic level proceeds as follows:

- development of the study direction is evaluated in the context of the development of higher education in the EU and Latvia involving representatives of RSU and other EU higher education institutions, students, employers in the discussion;
- perspectives of the study direction are reviewed in the context of the RSU Strategy, creating perspective development plans;
- the structure and content of study programmes (including examination forms, teaching methods, requirements for lecturers and students) are reviewed every year, taking into account the suggestions of students, lecturers and placement providers, defining specific objectives and tasks.

[1] Belskis, E. (March 21, 2017). General overview of situation in Digital Latvia. Retrieved May 18, 2019, from:

https://VARAM_Present_210317_E_Belskis.pdf&aqs=chrome..69i57j69i60.1240j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8#; Brice, L. (2016). Digitālais portrets kā Latvijas jauniešu (18-25) patības konstruēšana sociālajos medijos [Digital portrait as construction of the self by Latvian youth (18-25) in social media]. Doctoral thesis. Communication Studies Department of the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Latvia.

Brikse, I., & Spurava, G. (2014). Kids online - safety and risks: full findings from children survey of 9 to 16-year-olds in Latvia. Riga: Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Latvia. Buholcs, J. (2013). Individu attiecības tiešsaistes sociālajos tīklos [Relations of individuals in the online social networks]. Doctoral thesis. Riga: Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Latvia; Buhocs, J. (2014). SOURCES OF TRUST INFERENCE IN ONLINE INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS. In: Pavlíčková, T., & Reifová, I. Media, power and empowerment: Central and Eastern European Communication and Media Conference CEECOM Prague 2012, Chapter: 11, Publisher: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 66–71; Buholcs, J. (2014). Draugiem.lv kontaktgrupas domubiedru loma Latvijas emigrantu saziņā [The role of Draugiem.lv forums in communication of Latvian emigrants]. In: D. Kļaviņa (comp.). Latvija ārpus Latvijas: Kultūra, vēsture, emigrācija un nacionālā identitāte (Latvia outside Latvia: culture, history, emigration, and national identity). Conference Proceedings (356-368). Riga: The National Archives of Latvia. Retrieved July 11, 2019, from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/291523212_Draugiemlv_kontaktgrupas_domubiedri_loma_Latvijas_emigrantu_sazina; Buholcs, J. & Tabuns, A. (2015). Latvijas emigrantu transnacionālo identitāšu izpausmes sociālo tīklu portālu lietojumā [THE MANIFESTATIONS OF LATVIAN EMIGRANTS' TRANSNATIONAL IDENTITIES THROUGH THEIR USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES]. In: I. Mieriņa, Latvijas emigrantu kopienas: Cerību diaspora. (Communities of Latvian emigrants: the diaspora of hope). Riga: Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, University of Latvia, 128-143. Retrieved August 8, 2019, from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/289253964_Latvijas_emigrantu_transnacionalo_identitasu_izpausmes_socialo_tiklu_portalu_lietojuma.

1.2. Aims of the study direction and their compliance with the scope of activities of the higher education institution/ college, the strategic development directions, as well as the needs and the development trends of the society and the national economy.

In accordance with RSU Development Strategy 2017-2021, one of the indicators is the development of an offer of locally and internationally competitive study programmes in accordance with the labour market demand in Latvia and Europe for special, integrated specialist competences, including increasing the number of state-funded study places for studies in the areas of social sciences. In the field of social sciences, state budget positions are limited to some doctoral study programmes. Each year, RSU participates in official correspondence with line ministries on the allocation of state budget positions to social science study programmes. Unfortunately, these negotiations have not been successful.

Conformity of the Study Direction to the scope of activity of the institution of higher education, strategic development directions, needs of the socio-economic development and development trends:

1) relevance to the directions of strategic development, needs of socio-economic development and development trends:

- communication processes are spreading across all sub-systems of social activity (politics, economy, media, courts); their impact is characterised by geopolitical processes, technological development and changes in the structure of the media; the content of study programmes within the Study Direction is adapted to these changes, including changes in the structure of the economy characterised by the growth of digital services and diversity of communication processes, the need for media and information literacy as a transversal skill for all groups of the society (see School 2030, Mass Media Policy Guidelines of Latvia);

- the need to ensure the security of the information space of Latvia, the integration of society (see Digital Single Market Strategy, EU Audio-visual Media Services Directive; National Strategy for the Development of the Electronic Media Industry 2018. – for the year 2022, priorities for national digital development processes);

2) conformity to the scope of activity of the institution of higher education:

- according to RSU Strategy, the Study Direction provides research-based higher education in social sciences, as the research-based content is provided in the study process, research in the field of media communication is developed, integrating research results, new research and development of research methods and tools;

- research is provided in strategic communication, including through the development of interdisciplinary research in social sciences.

The strategy of RSU study programme Information and Communication Science, accredited for six years in 2012, is based on the RSU common strategy. Evaluating the development of public communication environment in Latvia, in the European Union and other countries, Bachelor's and Master's study programmes in the direction of Information and Communication Science, each carry out a study process based on modern knowledge, international cooperation, research, critical thinking, and social responsibility principles within their competencies.

Common goals of the study direction:

- to provide and develop up-to-date, content-rich education highly valued in the labour

market in the Bachelor's, Master's and doctoral programmes in communication and information science, as well as in media studies;

- to train journalists, PR, multimedia, photography, media studies and communications, PR strategic management, health communication specialists with a Bachelor's and Master's degree in communication science who have advanced academic knowledge and practical skills in journalism, public relations, multimedia communication, photography, are able to participate in analysis of media environment and communication processes, to work professionally, to conduct research in the mentioned fields and to solve problems of public interest by improving the quality of various fields of public communication and developing professional ethics;
- to train academically educated social science specialists who are able to independently use the acquired theoretical knowledge and research methods in solving specific problems;
- to facilitate the competitiveness of professionals in the local and European labour markets and to achieve that this competitiveness builds on good theoretical knowledge and a high level of skills in communication analysis, media, public relations, and photography;
- to implement modern knowledge acquisition in communication theories and social research methods, paying attention to new theoretical approaches, research of and solutions to current communication problems in European countries and Latvia;
- to stimulate interest in Latvian society and in Europe on current social problems and solutions thereto by involving researchers from Latvia and abroad in the implementation of study programmes, as well as by involving students in research carried out by the academic staff of the department;
- to provide in-depth knowledge in various study courses of communication science and to study communication research methods;
- to understand the cultural implications of the digital age while studying in a creative collaborative environment, as well as to manage personal creative projects in journalism, public relations, multimedia communication, photography individually and in groups;
- interdisciplinary links of photographic media with cinematography, television, internet, print media, visual communication, social media, art, producing their creative work for the needs of a variety of commercial and non-commercial projects;
- to provide competences to present their ideas, to speak in front of an audience, and to use different verbal and visual communication approaches;
- to develop scientific research skills, based on qualitative and quantitative research traditions;
- to develop competencies in the use of modern communication technologies;
- to ensure a modern study environment and academic competence by developing the professional quality of lecturers;
- to develop research and expertise in the field of communication and information by providing innovative research that can be used to evaluate, address and forecast contemporary communication processes and problems;
- recognising the growing importance of communication and media in society, to develop Bachelor's and Master's programmes in cooperation with media industry professionals, non-governmental organisations in the field of communication and involving students in research projects;
- to develop the Communication Culture and Multimedia doctoral study programme as well as the Master's programme in English in cooperation with other Latvian and EU higher education institutions, as well as to improve the offer of communication and media study courses in other RSU faculties, thus ensuring integration of study programmes offered at RSU Faculty of Communication.

1.3. SWOT analysis of the study direction with regard to the set aims by providing explanations on how the higher education institution/ college expects to eliminate/ improve weaknesses, prevent threats, and avail themselves of the given opportunities, etc. The assessment of the plan for the development of the study direction for the next six years and the procedure of the elaboration thereof. In case there is no development plan elaborated or the aims/ objectives are set for a shorter period of time, information on the elaboration of the plan for the development of the study direction for the next assessment period shall be provided.

Internal factors	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The traditions and reputation created by the study direction as well as RSU communication studies, developing specialised study programmes and research in various fields of communication in Latvia. · Interconnection of Bachelor's, Master's, and doctoral study programmes and access to all levels of higher education. · Modular system and solid technical and methodological basis of studies. · Qualification and experience of the lecturers, possibility to use the potential of doctoral students in communication and sociology. · Involvement of field professionals and researchers in the implementation of the study programmes. · The content and structure of the study programmes of the study direction provide the knowledge and skills to work in various positions and levels in the field of communication in the public, private sector, as well as to work independently as a communication content author, producer, consultant, and to establish communication-related companies. · Development of technological capabilities at RSU: e-studies environment and use of student media in the study process. · Possibility to continue the studies in a doctoral study programme. · High motivation of students. · High rating of the study programme of the study direction within the framework of an international higher education quality assessment project. · Support for the development of social science studies at senior RSU management level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Study programmes of the study programme are funded exclusively by private individuals, contributing to instability and dependence of the development of the study direction on the number of students, as well as unfair competition between state-established universities (because other universities have state-funded study places). · The heavy workload of the lecturers of the study programme, which also influences research, opportunities to participate in other activities. · High advertising costs for the communication of study programmes of the study direction; they are still not recognised well enough. · The need to attract foreign lecturers to ensure quality and diversity of content, which complicates the organisation of the study process and increases its costs. · Most of the research needed for the study direction is possible by attracting short-term resources, which reduces the sustainability of research.

External factors	
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · To enhance the content of the study courses in response to the changing needs of the labour market, taking into account the development of science and strengthening the uniqueness of the study programmes of the direction. · To develop the studies in e-environment and use of ICT in the study process. · To include study courses created by foreign lecturers in the study programmes of the study direction. · To ensure broader publicity and advertising of the study programmes of the study direction, promoting the recognition thereof; · To involve students in research and creative work at a greater level, at the same time preparing lecturers to ensure implementation of the communication study programmes. · To develop study programmes of the study direction as a centre of media, public relations projects, research, and studies. · To strengthen cooperation with research institutions, employers, including the implementation of lifelong learning principles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Competition with similar study programmes in Latvian higher education institutions, opportunities to study in other higher education institutions from the state budget funds, as well as aggressive policy of attracting students from foreign (Baltic States, Scandinavian countries, United Kingdom) universities. · The need for students to combine their studies with part-time or full-time work in order to pay their tuition fees. · Unstable number of students due to demographic, emigration, and unfavourable social conditions. · Comparatively high costs of implementation of the study programmes of the study direction due to the diverse content of the study programme, the use of technologies in the study process, and the need to attract foreign lecturers, as well as the need to maintain high quality standards. · Inconsistent public policies in higher education and science; insufficient funding for science in general and insignificant funding for research in the social sciences and humanities reduce the possibilities for strengthening research in the study direction. · Unfair conditions of competition among universities.

Actions planned as a result of the SWOT analysis

To maintain the strengths:

- proactive participation in RSU development and reputation building;
- continuous improvement of the form and content of study programmes at all levels;
- maintenance and development of media technologies and the Student Media platform, development of study and technology accessibility;
- provision of student placements, maintaining a connection with employers;
- participation in the development and implementation of new tools and processes of e-studies;
- maintaining students' motivation: course leaders, cooperation with the RSU Student Union, events, involvement in research, applied projects, cooperation with creative industry companies, placement opportunities, etc.

To diminish weaknesses:

- to keep the issue of equal redistribution of state-funded study places in social sciences up to date, promoting RSU student self-government support to reduce discrimination against students of study programmes in social sciences;
- balancing the workload of lecturers by providing opportunities for research and preparation of publications;
- participation in RSU communication activities, explaining the advantages of the study

programmes of the study direction;

- improving financial management by increasing savings, increasing tuition fees where necessary, in line with the inflation level and the process of introducing additional services;
- increasing participation in international research projects.

To use the opportunities:

- expanding cooperation with higher education institutions of other EU countries in order to modernise the content of the study programmes - Erasmus + opportunities widely used;
- to continue to use the opportunities of the digital environment and ICT in the study process;
- to promote the recognition of the study programmes of the study direction and the motivation of the students by maintaining regular communication in social media, events ("Lampa", etc.);
- to develop research in the fields represented in the study direction in the communication culture, media literacy, visual communication, increase the number of presented doctoral theses;
- to develop a study offer for lifelong learning through RSU Open University and other projects.

To mitigate the impact of external threats:

- to develop study programmes in English (currently two study programmes) to attract students from other countries, mainly from the Baltic and Nordic countries as well as Central European countries;
- to encourage the existing students to use study and student loans to cover tuition fees, increasing opportunities for comprehensive studies;
- to create a flexible study environment suitable for different study forms (video lectures, e-exams, etc.);
- consistent development of research projects and research within the RSU;
- participation in the public debate on the development of higher education and science in Latvia.

The Development plan is developed in cooperation of the head of the study direction with heads of study programmes, then obtaining an agreement from Study Quality Committee, Faculty Council, Deans' Council, and in accordance with Development Strategy of Rīga Stradiņš University. See Annex No. 4.1. Development Plan of the Study Direction.

1.4. The structure of the management of the study direction and the relevant study programmes, and the analysis and assessment of the efficiency thereof, including the assessment of the role of the director of the study direction and the heads of the study programmes, their responsibilities, and the cooperation with other heads of the study programmes, as well as the assessment of the support by the administrative and technical staff of the higher education institution/ college provided within the study direction.

See Annex No. 4.2. Management Structure of the Study Direction.

Head of the study direction manages the work of the RSU study direction. Heads of the study programmes manage the study programmes included in the study direction. The Study Quality Council (see Annex No. 4.3) is working as support in the development of the study direction and study programmes. It is working in accordance with the regulations approved by the RSU Senate, and its purpose is to oversee, ensure, and increase the quality of studies. The composition of the

SQC is approved at the council of the faculty, involving the head of the respective study programme, heads of the academic structural units or lecturers delegated by them, as well as employers and students. The composition of the SQC may include representatives of alumni and professional associations. SQC evaluates the necessity to create a study direction and programme in accordance with the trends of the labour market in Latvia and the EU, submits proposals for involvement of independent experts (employers) for evaluation of the topicality of the study programme and content quality. SQC participates in preparation of descriptions and reports of the study programmes and study direction, is involved in reviewing of internal laws and regulations, if these are related to the study process. Competence of the SQC also includes assessment of the content of study programme and the long-term development of the study direction. SQC implements also the principle of student-centred approach. SQC includes students who together with other members of the Council adopt decisions aimed at the study process, quality, development, etc., in accordance with the regulations of RSU regarding the work of the Study Quality Council. SQC implements a democratic management model where decisions are made by voting in the SQC meetings at least once every semester or as necessary. Decisions are approved by majority vote. Usually decisions are taken by using the principle of consensus. SQC operates within the framework of regulations approved by RSU and by implementing RSU policy.

The requirements for planning, supervision, and quality control of the study process at RSU are defined by process description No 35 "Organisation of the Study Process". The requirements for determination and evaluation of learning outcomes are included in process description No 6 "Evaluation and Submission of Learning Outcomes" and "Academic Regulations I".

Work organisation of the StP is based on the needs of students, social and labour market trends, development guidelines for national and international higher education and science, etc. Implementation of the StP is constructed, taking into account the needs of students during the study process and carefully evaluating the quality of the StP. The study work at RSU is organised by the faculty and departments with the support of administrative departments, and is overseen by the SQC, Faculty Council, Rectorate, Dean's Council, Senate.

The head of the study programme is responsible for the management of the study process, updating of the study programme, drawing up, formatting and processing of documentation in accordance with laws and regulations, participation in research work.

When evaluating the management efficiency of the study direction, it may be concluded that its content is qualitative and well organised, it is implemented not only by the head of the StD, but also by a group of stakeholders, consisting of heads of study programmes, lecturers, student course leaders, Student Union, as well as particularly the SQC, as described at the beginning of this paragraph.

1.5. Description and assessment of the requirements and the system for the admission of students by specifying, inter alia, the regulatory framework of the admission procedures and requirements. The assessment of the study period, professional experience, and the options for the students to have their previously acquired formal and non-formal education recognised within the study direction by providing specific examples of the application of these procedures.

Admission to RSU takes place based on admission requirements of the respective study level approved by the RSU Senate as defined for the particular academic year. The same way, admission

takes place and admission requirements are developed in accordance with external laws and regulations – the Law on Institutions of Higher Education, Cabinet Regulation No. 846 of 10 October 2006 “Regulations Regarding Requirements, Criteria and Procedure for Admission to Study Programmes”, Cabinet Regulation No. 543 of 29 September 2015 “Regulation on Replacement of Foreign Language Centralised Examination in the Programme of Comprehensive Education Programme with the Test of International Testing Institution in a Foreign Language”, as well as other external laws and regulations and the Constitution of RSU. Admission in later stages of studies in RSU takes place on the basis of Cabinet Regulation No. 932 of 16 November 2004 “The Procedure for Starting Studies in Later Stages of Studies” and Cabinet Regulation No. 505 of 14 August 2018 “Regulations on Recognition of Competence Acquired Outside Formal Education or in Professional Experience and of Learning Outcomes Achieved in Prior Education”, and other external laws and regulations.

RSU has admission regulations for each level of studies. The admission regulations are available on the RSU website [in Latvian](#) and [in English](#).

In accordance with Cabinet Regulation No. 932 of 16 November 2004 “The Procedure for Starting Studies in Later Stages of Studies” and Cabinet Regulation No. 505 of 14 August 2018 “Regulations on Recognition of Competence Acquired Outside Formal Education or in Professional Experience and of Learning Outcomes Achieved in Prior Education”, RSU ensures fair recognition of previous education or professional experience in order for the applicant to be able to apply for studies in later stages of studies. This process is implemented by taking into account the fact that students are mobile both within the framework of the higher system and between the educational systems.

Admission regulations define the procedure for submission of documents, deadlines thereof, process of the competition, procedure for appeal and for contesting and appeal of decisions related to admission, as well as the procedure of signing the study agreement and matriculation, and requirements define the rights and duties of the applicant and RSU. Annexes to the admission regulations provide an accurate information on each study programme, into which admission has been planned during the specific academic year, including admission requirements, documents to be submitted, etc.

After confirmation of Admission Regulations by the RSU Senate, these are published on the RSU website www.rsu.lv and are available to any interested person. RSU representatives continually ensure that the RSU website provides the current information on study programmes; moreover, accurate selection criteria for admission are specified for each study programme. RSU website also features published information on availability of state-funded study places and availability of study places financed from the funds of natural or legal persons, as well as information regarding admission dates and procedure for submission of documents. At RSU Student Services, people may receive consultations on the admission procedure, including admission requirements, challenging the admission results, rights and duties of the applicants. This structural unit provides services by using e-mail, telephone, as well as meeting the people in person. Consultations on admission requirements, for example, admission examinations and specification thereof are provided by heads of the study programmes; thus, they provide applicants with maximum information and preparation for admission at RSU.

RSU ensures admission procedures corresponding to the aim that are based on previously defined and published admission regulations. RSU admission policy, matriculation procedures and criteria are implemented consistently; applicants are admitted based on open and equal competition. RSU ensures an equal admission processes: uniform admission regulations have been set for all candidates with specific and previously known requirements rooted in respective conditions of the state level and principles of law. That way, the rights of the most suitable applicants to study in

their selected study programmes are ensured. RSU fulfils its obligation to accept the documents submitted by the applicants and to decide on compliance thereof with the requirements mentioned in annexes to the admission requirements. RSU also announces the admission results in accordance with the provisions of the admission requirements and organises signing of study agreements with the applicants who have passed the competition. After signing of the study agreements and fulfilment of the defined applicant's obligations, RSU ensures matriculation of these applicants.

The qualification to be obtained has been defined in the documents of accreditation of study directions and licensing of study programmes, descriptions of study programmes and directions, admission requirements and diplomas.

Diplomas are issued by RSU in accordance with the Cabinet Regulation No. 202 "Procedure for Issuance of State-Recognised Documents Certifying Higher Education" which define criteria and procedure for issuance of state-recognised documents certifying higher education of completion of an accredited study programme, as well as templates of the mentioned documents. In addition, RSU has developed internal procedure "Procedure for Preparation and Issuance of Diplomas and Supplements Thereto" and "Procedure for Translation, Certification, etc., of Diplomas Issued by RSU and Preparation of Other Documents/Information in English".

Procedure for recognition is regulated by:

- 1) External laws and regulations:
 - Law on Institutions of Higher Education – Sections 59.2 and 59.3;
 - Cabinet Regulation No. 505 of 14 August 2018 "Regulations on Recognition of Competence Acquired Outside Formal Education or in Professional Experience and of Learning Outcomes Achieved in Prior Education";

2) Internal laws and regulations:

- "Regulations on Recognition of Competence Acquired Outside Formal Education or in Professional Experience and of Learning Outcomes Achieved in Prior Education at Rīga Stradiņš University (Approved on the RSU Senate meeting of 21 May 2019, minutes No. 2-1/5/2019)".

In accordance with the [Cabinet Regulation No. 505 of 14 August 2018](#) "Regulations on Recognition of Competence Acquired Outside Formal Education or in Professional Experience and of Learning Outcomes Achieved in Prior Education" (available only in Latvian), a person has the right to address RSU with an application regarding recognition of knowledge, skills and competences acquired outside formal education or in professional experience, as well as learning outcomes achieved in previous education.

Commission formed by the higher education institution makes a decision regarding recognition of knowledge, skills and competences acquired outside formal education or in professional experience, as well as learning outcomes achieved in previous education. Its rights, duties, conditions for creation are included in "Regulations on Recognition of Learning Outcomes Achieved in Previous Education or Professional Experience at Rīga Stradiņš University".

In order to begin recognition of knowledge, skills and competences acquired outside formal education or in professional experience, the following should be submitted to the commission: [application](#); documents proving knowledge, skills and competences acquired outside formal education or in professional experience; payment order from the bank proving the payment made.

The commission evaluates the knowledge, skills and competences acquired by the person outside formal education or in professional experience and if these comply with the learning outcomes to be achieved in the respective study programme, shall recognise and assign respective credit points.

Examination of the application and decision-making in accordance with Section 59.3, Paragraph 1 of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education takes place within four months from the date of receipt of the application.

In order to begin recognition of learning outcomes achieved in previous education, the following should be submitted to the commission: [application](#); certificate on study modules or study courses completed at the higher education institution by the person as a listener; payment order from the bank for the payment made. Examination of the application and decision-making takes place within the period specified in the Administrative Procedure Law, i.e., within one month as of the receipt of the application.

By the order of the Rector has been defined “Procedure for Recognition of Learning Outcomes Achieved in Previous Education or Professional Experience”; RSU defines the procedure of how RSU performs acceptance of documents, assessment and recognition of knowledge, skills and competences obtained outside formal education or in professional experience, as well as learning outcomes achieved in previous education.

RSU has successfully organised its work with a single commission, ensuring involvement of a respective expert from the respective thematic area of the education. Such approach (one commission for all thematic areas of education) has ensured uniform approach throughout the university; different interpretation is avoided, thus providing equal attitude towards persons.

One student has used the possibility to write an application on recognition of knowledge, skills and competences obtained outside formal education or in professional education, as well as learning outcomes achieved in previous education in the Information and Communication Science study direction.

As an example of the recognition of knowledge, skills and competences acquired in professional experience may be mentioned the situation when enrolling in higher education institution for the Bachelor’s study programme Journalism, the applicant requested to align the learning outcomes achieved in his professional experience to study courses Introduction to Journalism, Journalism Methods and Genres, Placement I, Placement II in the study programme, as well as other study courses, which were completed in a previously unfinished study process and professional experience. In order for the learning outcomes achieved in professional experience to be recognised, in addition to the application the applicant also submitted statements from the work places and transcripts of records from the previous places of studies. The statements specified both the length of service and job description. When considering the submitted documents at the commission meeting, an expert was appointed – a specialist in the respective field from the university’s Faculty of Communication, in order to prepare an Opinion on Recognition of Learning Outcomes Achieved in Professional Experience. Based on the expert’s opinion on recognition of learning outcomes achieved in professional experience to the amount of 40 credit points, a decision was prepared by the commission regarding recognition of the learning outcomes achieved in professional experience and inclusion in several study courses of the Bachelor’s study programme Journalism.

Every year, 3-5 people contact the RSU’s Faculty of Communication to evaluate opportunities for obtaining higher education through the procedure of aligning practical experience.

1.6. Assessment of the methods and procedures for the evaluation of students’ achievements, as well as the principles of their selection and the analysis of the compliance of the evaluation methods and procedures with the aims of the study

programmes and the needs of the students.

Students can familiarise themselves with the criteria, conditions and binding procedures for the assessment of student performance in the Academic Regulations I (available in [Latvian](#) and [English](#)) and Academic Regulations III - Regulations of Doctoral Studies (available in [Latvian](#) and [English](#)). Requirements for defining and evaluating learning outcomes – knowledge, skills, competence – are included in Process Description No. 6 “Evaluation and Submission of Learning Outcomes”.

Methods of assessment of student performance and achieved learning outcomes, as well as assessment criteria for study course acquisition, are defined in the description of each study course and are available to all students prior to the start of the study course. The academic freedom of each lecturer is respected in the implementation of the study courses, including the development and implementation of study examinations, at the same time providing that the teaching and examination methods must be chosen according to the learning outcomes to be achieved in the study course. Both summative and formative assessment are combined in the study process to enhance students’ individual performance and assess the level of learning outcomes achieved. In the context of learning outcomes, both study course-specific and transversal knowledge, skills, and attitudes are important, therefore, students’ active involvement and participation, initiative, and taking responsibility are additionally evaluated. Individual assessments of intermediate and final examinations of study courses are available to each student on their student profile in the RSU e-studies environment.

Creative and practical works have been assessed following the aim of each study course. For the assessment of creative works, assessment criteria, as well as criteria for the form and content have been defined. For example, for creative Bachelor’s theses, students have to develop a concept based on an original idea for their creative work that, in turn, has to be implemented using technological solutions and devices relevant to the corresponding genre or format. Following the ethical principles of the particular field is a significant part of the criteria for creative work. Criteria for assessing creative works are drafted and included in methodological guidelines for drafting study papers.

1.7. Description and assessment of the academic integrity principles, the mechanisms for the compliance with these principles, and the way in which the stakeholders are informed. Specify the plagiarism detection tools used by providing examples of the use of these tools and mechanisms.

RSU has developed RSU Code of Ethics and established the Ethics Commission that considers violations and cases of disputes on the basis of applications. RSU has developed and approved document “Methodological Guidelines for References and Listing of Reference Sources and Literature”, which explains to students the principles of using the works of other authors and making correct references. In order to promote compliance with academic integrity and make it easier for lecturers to check student papers, RSU has implemented and uses the Unified Computerised Plagiarism Control System of Latvian institutions of higher education to verify the originality of final theses, and for wider use, RSU has acquired a license for the Turnitin content originality control tool. For ease of use, the tool is integrated into the RSU e-studies website. In order to improve the lecturers’ knowledge of the possibilities of this tool and to develop the skills

for using it, RSU Centre for Educational Growth regularly organises practical trainings for lecturers and support staff on the benefits and use of this tool for checking, correcting students' independent work and providing feedback in the study courses, as well as for checking qualification and diploma papers at the end of the study programme.

Implementation of academic integrity:

- In practice it means that students of all levels learn the fundamental academic integrity principles, for example, in courses "Introduction to Studies and Speciality", "Seminar on Bachelor Paper", "Pro Seminar on Master's Thesis", "Academic Ethics";
- Heads of the study programmes are obliged to inform the students on academic integrity principles and prevention procedures at RSU FC (examination of plagiarism cases in the meetings of the Departments; maintenance of the plagiarism registry, recording each case; risk of exmatriculation in case of detection a repeated case of plagiarism);
- All final papers (course, bachelor's, master's papers) are uploaded to e-study site and verified by using Turnitin tool;
- Most of the examination papers of the study courses are verified by using the mentioned tool;
- Regular consultations with RSU self-government take place on issues of academic integrity.

The number of plagiarism cases has reduced since the introduction of electronic assessment of papers and students' education. Renewal of study tasks on a regular basis also fosters the prevention of plagiarism. If the case of plagiarism is detected, the case has been investigated at the meeting of the department by giving the student the opportunity to explain the situation and reasons for plagiarism. If the case has been declared as plagiarism, the student has to sign the plagiarism register certifying that he or she is aware that in case of repeated plagiarism the student shall be excluded from the list of students. If the student is caught plagiarising in a Bachelor's or Master's thesis, the student is not allowed to defend the thesis and is excluded from the list of students.

All in all, the principles of academic integrity are successfully adhered to in the study process and violations of academic integration are currently primarily considered in a decentralised way at the level of faculties, study programmes, and study courses. In order to promote the implementation of a uniform approach to definition, detection, consideration of violations of academic integrity and application of punishment throughout the university, RSU has developed a development and implementation plan of the framework for compliance with academic integrity culture and its principles. This initiative has been included in the draft application of the Ministry of Education and Science Specific Aid Objective 8.2.3 "To ensure better management at higher education institutions". Within the framework of development of a support system, the main planned activities are:

- promoting prevention. Preventive promotion of compliance with principles of ethics and academic integrity is envisaged by developing online study courses in e-studies, regular studies, and discussions at the university, educational self-learning materials, self-assessment tests. Three main target groups have been specified for the activity of the action: students, academic staff, and scientific staff; in addition, promotion of competence of the administration on principles of ethics and academic integrity is envisaged;
- improvement of the internal system. It is intended to develop and improve internal regulations of RSU that will allow to align the definition and implementation of unified principles of ethics and the management of academic integrity for students, academic staff, and scientific staff. Internal regulations shall define types of violations, develop processes and procedure for consideration of violations, as well as determine the applicable sanctions in

accordance with the type of violation and the situation, thus promoting transparency and consistency in decision-making. Plans have been made to establish a new centralised committee that would participate in the alignment of the internal system by developing and approving procedures and regulatory framework so that it is adapted for consideration of violations of academic integrity by all students of the university and the unified committee is able to make a decision appropriate for each situation according to unified approach and system for students of all faculties, thus ensuring proportionality of decisions, compliance thereof with the internal regulatory framework and consistency. Involvement of a change agent has been envisaged for the implementation and application of this activity.

Involvement of a competent and experienced external expert for implementation of a high-quality system of ethics and academic integrity has been planned in order to consult regarding defining of unified principles and alignment of regulatory framework, as well as implementation of prevention mechanisms.

In order to promote alignment of basic principles of ethics and academic integrity and compliance with these principles in Latvia, cooperation with several Latvian HEIs has been intended within the framework of this direction, providing for intellectual cooperation in the establishment of principles and development of materials, sharing of the developed resources with other HEIs (e-study courses, training materials), as well as further cooperation to promote ethics and academic integrity and to solve problematic issues at the state level in the project. So far, RSU has signed a declaration of strategic partnership with Red Cross Medical College of Rīga Stradiņš University, University of Latvia, and Riga Technical University, and other higher education institutions have agreed to cooperate to harmonise ethical and academic integrity principles; to develop teaching materials on the sharing of the academic integrity module; to exchange experience to introduce best practices in ensuring academic integrity; and raise the issue of academic integrity at national level.

1.8. Specify the websites (e.g. the homepage) on which the information on the study direction and the relevant study programmes is published (in all languages in which the study programmes are implemented) by indicating the persons responsible for the compliance of the information available on the website with the information published in the official registers.

RSU employs a wide range of modern marketing communication tools that provide information about the higher education institution, which is a modern, open university and offers high-quality education. RSU ensures presence of the university and high-quality content in traditional and digital media, such as a website that was reconstructed in 2017, strategic work is carried out with the audience on social media, and innovative solutions for communication with young people in social media are implemented. The study programme brochure is complemented by augmented reality application Overly. Advertising campaigns are dominated by digital media and the effectiveness of the selected advertising channels is monitored. Advertising materials and channels are tailored to the respective audience.

In the long term, relations are established with secondary schools all over Latvia, as well as secondary school students are offered direct contact with RSU, developing the RSU messenger programme, possibility to attend programme lectures they are interested in, organising open days, tours etc.

RSU participates in industry events (exhibition “School”, etc.), works with a database and e-mail

marketing, develops various activities and events also for the target groups of Master's and doctoral study programmes.

The information published on the university's [website](#) regarding the study programmes corresponding to the study direction corresponds to the information available in official registers, provides basic information to applicants and students, and is published in all languages of the study programme.

II - Description of the Study Direction (2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System)

2.1. Assessment of the efficiency of the internal quality assurance system within the study direction by specifying the measures undertaken to achieve the aims and outcomes of the study programmes and to ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study direction and the relevant study programmes.

Deming cycle is used for implementation and application of internal quality system: *Plan – Do – Check – Act* (see Figure 4).

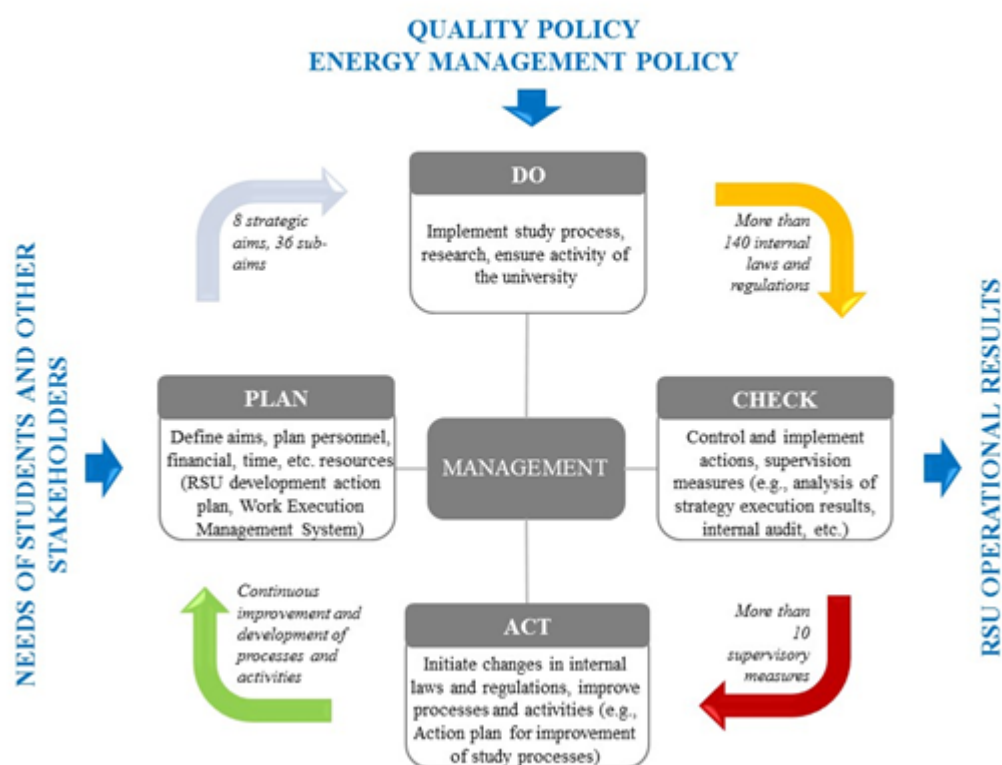


Figure 4. Implementation and application scheme of the internal quality system

In general, supervision of RSU activities is ensured by many activities that are integrated in everyday activities, for example, approval, validation, evaluation of work quality, distribution of duties and responsibilities, etc. At the same time, targeted control measures have been implemented that are used in various periods throughout the year.

Requirements for planning, supervision, and quality control of the study process in RSU are determined by Process Description No. 35 “Study Process Organisation”. Requirements for defining and evaluation of learning outcomes - knowledge, skills, competence - are included in Process Description No. 6 “Evaluation and Submission of Learning Outcomes” and “Academic Regulations I”.

In order to ensure supervision of study quality, a self-assessment of study directions, including SWOT analysis, is carried out once a year. In 2016, quality indicators of study programmes were approved. Heads of the study programmes summarise and assess the quality indicators of study programmes each year in accordance with “Procedure for Assessment of Quality Indicators of Study Programmes”. Results are included in the descriptions of study programmes. Data analysis related to studies, including a performance analysis, analysis of the results of study course surveys, analysis of visitation results, and other measures are also performed.

In order to ensure supervision of processes taking place at the university, analysis of quality criteria performance of processes is performed once a year. For example, one of the criteria in Process Description No. 6 “Evaluation and Submission of Learning Outcomes” is: “Number of complaints by the students regarding the entry of assessments is decreased by 5 % compared to the previous academic year”. Results are reported at the management meeting – Rectorate, where decisions are made regarding future activities.

The existing system ensures a comprehensive supervision of study quality with control measures throughout the year.

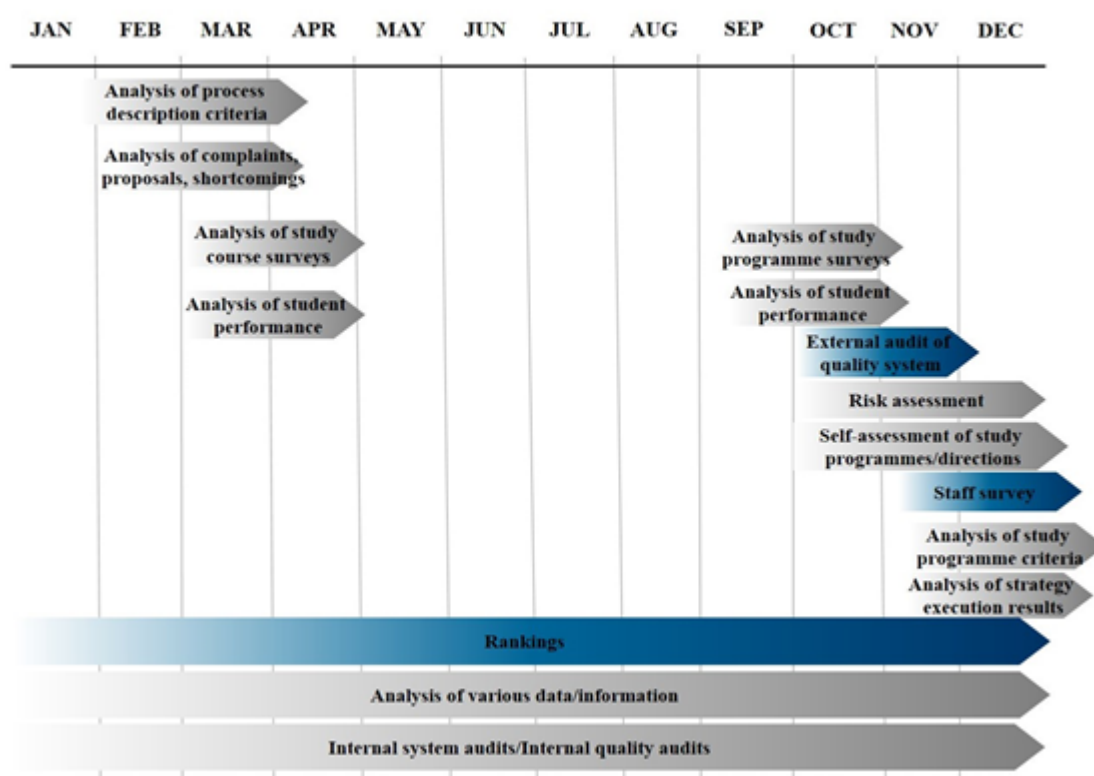


Figure 5. Measures of internal quality control.

measures performed, quality of studies is reviewed, and measures are performed to improve the quality.

2.2. Analysis and assessment of the system and the procedures for the development and review of the study programmes by providing specific examples of the procedures for the development of new study programmes within the study direction (including the approval of study programmes), the review of the study programmes, the aims, and regularity, as well as the stakeholders and their responsibilities. Description of the mechanism for obtaining and providing a feedback, including with regard to the work with the students, graduates, and employers.

Development and revision of study programmes at RSU

RSU has a set procedure for development, internal approval of study programmes, supervision, and periodic inspection of the operation thereof. These requirements are determined in the Regulations for Development and Approval of New Study Programmes at Rīga Stradiņš University and in detail - in Process Description No. 34 "Updating and Development of Study Courses, Study Programmes, Study Directions" (see Annex No. 1) in accordance with the requirements of external laws and regulations. Necessity, usefulness, and compliance of a new study programme to the set aims is evaluated by several RSU structural units and collegial institutions, including the Study Quality Council, Faculty Council, Dean's Council, Rectorate, and Senate. Supervision over the implementation of a study programme and its quality is ensured by the head of the study programme by evaluating the study process, learning outcomes, analysing the results of student surveys, changes to the trends in the labour market, and current events in the sector and world. The qualification to be obtained has been defined in the documents of licensing and accreditation of study programmes of study directions, descriptions of study programmes and directions, admission regulations and diplomas.

The StP development, approval and implementation process includes certain successive activities:

- detailed development of the StP concept, learning outcomes and description of the topicality of the StP based on latest scientific knowledge and the knowledge, skills and competences necessary in the future, and labour market demand, international development prospects of the study programme.
- development and expert examination of StP planning, study courses, their descriptions;
- development and expert examination of licensing documentation, licensing at the Academic Information Centre - expert visit and provision of an opinion, receiving of a licence;
- communication about the study programme;
- development of study materials and placement thereof in e-studies;
- recruitment and student admission;
- StP approbation;
- accreditation of the StP - preparation of accreditation documentation and accreditation in an agency included in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education according to national regulations.

The annual revision process of study programmes and study directions is regulated by an annual order of the Rector, and the goal is to prepare a summary of the annual study process quality monitoring. Report of academic year 2018/2019 shall include the following points:

1) Study quality monitoring assessment in 2018/2019 ac. year.

- Quality Indicators - primary, update of the test content, employer survey and implementation of recommendations, integration of simulation resources into learning outcomes (where applicable);

- Admission results, drop-out of the graduates and reasons for drop-outs.
- Questionnaire results (study programme assessment questionnaire results 2018/2019; How the completion of the graduate's questionnaires is promoted? How the questionnaire results are being analyzed? What changes have been made based on the results obtained? How are students being given feedback on the questionnaire, implemented and planned improvements?).
- Analysis of the academic performance.

2) SWOT analysis;

3) Current and improvement events of the study programme 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 ac. year.

- Implementation of expert recommendations, etc., changes in the study programme, planning, content and organization. Involvement of new lecturers, qualification improvement of the lecturers, attraction of guest lecturers. Achievements since the completion of the mapping, clarification of study course results, actualization of study courses, promotion of academic integrity.
- Promotion of research, integration of research and practice in the study process, publications, conferences, projects.
- Modernization, digitization, innovation, simulation-based learning, interdisciplinarity, etc.
- International cooperation, resources sharing, expanding research and innovation potential, promotion of mobility.
- Cooperation with employers and professional organizations, including involvement in the update of the profession standard.

Preparation of a study programme report is usually performed by the head of the StP, about a StD – head of the StD. Reports are validated and approved by RSU administrative structural units and collegial institutions:

- Study Quality Council and Faculty Council,
- Dean's Council,
- Senate (approval).

The development and revision of study programmes is carried out in a qualitative and thought-out manner. The annual report is published on the RSU Lecturer Portal under the StP information, the Documents section.

Mechanism of obtaining and providing feedback in work with students and graduates

Student survey of the course conclusion is organised in accordance with the procedure defined by RSU - Process Description No. 22 "Surveys" (see Annex No. 1):

- for each study course in e-studies (for more information on e-studies, see Section 3.3), students complete the course evaluation questionnaire, where they can express their opinion and proposals both regarding the content of the study course and its implementation methods, competences and work style of lecturers;
- upon completion of studies, they evaluate the study programme in general by completing the survey regarding the study programme;
- views of RSU alumni are identified and implemented primarily by the heads of StPs. In 2017, in order to improve the obtaining of graduate feedback, RSU Alumni Association in cooperation with RSU Department of Studies and RSU Centre for Educational Growth developed a unified questionnaire for graduates, and plans were made to develop an electronic version of the questionnaire and create a database.

Once a year, the results of the study course survey and study programme survey are analysed. Results are reviewed at the meeting of departments, faculty councils, Study Quality Councils and Dean's Council, and as an aggregate are reflected in the mentioned annual report. Therefore, study courses are updated each year in accordance with the evaluation given by the students. Student representatives are also involved in faculty councils ensuring representation of their opinion in decision-making processes. Generally, RSU practices student-centred education, which is described in more detail in Section I Paragraph 1.3.

Feedback to the students is ensured on the RSU Academic Staff portal since January 2018. Twice a year (within two weeks after closing the survey), academic staff and heads of academic structural units can publish the feedback to the students regarding survey results and decisions made for improvement of study courses. Feedback can be published as soon as the survey has been closed. Survey section has restricted access, by default the rights are granted to the academic staff, heads of departments and those who have been granted the right to the course. It is possible to publish feedback in Latvian and English, depending on the language of the study course. Possible statuses of the feedback – “Not Submitted”, “Being Prepared”, “Published”. Head of the academic structural unit has been provided a function to publish the feedback prepared by the academic staff. Academic staff and heads of academic structural units have access to a preview (assessment of questionnaires of the study course evaluation) of how the students will see the published feedback. In the published feedback, students will see the survey statistics and feedback published by the academic staff or head of the academic structural unit.

In September 2019, feedback was given on 43% of the courses completed in the spring semester of 2019.

Feedback function gives an opportunity for the academic staff to respond to student questionnaires for the evaluation of the study courses, and the students can find out about the further use of their feedback. The students can familiarise themselves with the feedback on the Student portal where they can see the feedback also for the previous semester. RSU is planning to improve the feedback system during the academic year 2019/2020 in order to ensure that the students who start the study course have access to the results of the study course questionnaire and the feedback provided by the lecturer, which will enable the students to evaluate how the planned changes in the study course are implemented.

Study Programme Administrator of the Study Programme Administration Unit of the Study Department (SD SPAU) is involved in ensuring feedback by activating the surveys regarding StPs, electronically informing the students and the head of the StP on active StP surveys (take place before the final surveys). Whereas the head of the study programme and Student Union motivate the students to complete the survey questionnaires.

After the completion of a questionnaire, the results of the questionnaire by study directions and faculties are summarised and analysed at the RSU level by the Study Process Quality and Analysis Division of the RSU Centre for Educational Growth, informing RSU management, heads of study programmes, and deans of the conclusions. The head of the study programme analyses survey results at the study programme level and reports the results to the SQC / FC, submits a summary to the Dean and the head of the study direction; during the process, the SQC / FC familiarise themselves with the survey results and take a decision on the necessary changes to the StP implementation. Afterwards, once a year the Dean reports to the DC on survey results and decisions made by the SQC / FC, as well as the necessary changes in the StP implementation.

Mechanism of obtaining and providing feedback from/to employers

Employers are regularly invited to guest lectures, during which they have the opportunity to talk to

students. Regular employer feedback and suggestions are obtained by reviewing placement provider assessments of students (Bachelor's study programmes). Employer representatives are constantly invited as guest lecturers, for example, Ingus Bērziņš, the editor-in-chief of the news portal DELFI, who has a doctoral degree in communication science reads lectures in the Master's study course Media Economy and Management, while lectures in the Analysis of Communication Situations course are read by Klinta Ločmele, expert of the Media Policy Division of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia. Attracting employers at all levels of studies is an ongoing practice of content creation. It is important that representatives of employers are also present among students (especially in Master's and doctoral study programmes), allowing heads of study programmes to discuss the content of studies on a regular basis.

Several employers, such as Linda Curika, Communications Director at NATO's Stratkom, are members of the Quality Council of the study direction.

In addition, employers are provided with the opportunity to participate in examination commissions, which is ensured by inviting field specialists in the presentation of Bachelor's and Master's theses.

2.3. Description of the procedures and/or systems according to which the students are expected to submit complaints and proposals (except for the surveys to be conducted among the students). Specify whether and how the students have access to the information on the possibilities to submit complaints and proposals and how the outcomes of the examination of the complaints and proposals and the improvements of the study direction and the relevant study programmes are communicated by providing the respective examples.

Procedure for submission, review of student complaints and proposals has been defined in Process Description No. 31 "Management of Complaints, Appeals, Non-Conformities and Proposals", requirements for submission and consideration of appeals have additionally been defined in "Academic Regulations I". In accordance with the internal procedure, students may submit complaints to the Student Services, Student Union and Quality Assurance and Internal Audit Department. Mentioned structural units ensure registration of complaints and proposals and transfer them for review to the responsible structural unit. After evaluation of the complaint/proposal and performance of corrective actions, the submitter of the complaint is informed in writing regarding results of the review and actions performed. Once a year, the information on all received complaints/proposals is summarised, and results are included in the Report on the Quality Management System, and information is taken into account when performing RSU risk assessment. Information on possibilities to submit complaints or proposals is available to the students on the RSU website in Latvian and English and on the Student portal.

Students can submit complaints, non-conformities, proposals, as well as appeals to the Student Services. All these applications can be submitted by a student in person, electronically by sending from their RSU student email to the following email: atsauksmes@rsu.lv or complaints@rsu.lv. Applications can also be submitted by mail. The student may submit the application of complaints, non-conformities or proposals anonymously. The student has to identify themselves in appeals, otherwise it cannot be determined, whose and which examination has to be re-evaluated.

All complaints, proposals, non-conformities, appeals should be addressed to the head of the particular structural unit. In case of any uncertainties, students may address the Student Services that will provide answers to unclear issues and, if necessary, will consult on how to complete the forms of complaints, proposals, non-conformities, appeals. Staff of Student Services consults without interfering in the content of the document to be submitted, without affecting the student's opinion. For example, in case of appeal, the staff of Student Services clarifies, which examination is the subject of the appeal; how many times has the student taken the examination, because this will affect who is the recipient of the appeal; in which study subject the examination was taken; and who was the supervisor of the examination. Upon receipt of the application, staff of Student Services verifies whether it includes all necessary details, asking to add them to the application, if necessary. Such consultations are provided to students also in case of submitting applications with complaints, proposals, and non-conformities.

After receipt of applications, staff of Student Services ensures whether the application specifies the correct recipient, then registers the application in the Document Management System, transferring it for further consideration by the competent structural unit. When considering appeals, the student is invited to provide their opinion regarding the content of the appeal. The student is notified about the result after considering the appeal. If the student is not satisfied with the decision, the student can appeal the decision to a higher institution.

In 2018, several anonymous complaints were received without indicating information that could identify the person. In order for the student to remain anonymous, yet to be able to receive the decision of the commission that has considered the complaint, the student may receive the decision electronically by specifying their private email address.

Even though the consideration of complaints works successfully at RSU with maximum respect for student rights, interests, and responsibilities, there are some things that should be improved. For example, when a student submits an anonymous complaint, and the information on consideration of the case is sent to the anonymous email of the student by the competent structural unit, the person is invited to arrive and participate in the meeting where the case is considered. In such messages, the sender of the email should specify that the student has the right to attend the meeting where the case is considered, yet it is not an obligation because the student will be identified in case of attendance.

The current procedure of submission, registration, and consideration of complaints, appeals, non-conformities, and proposals is in effect since 4 April 2018. Previous procedure was revised, and improvements were made. The new procedure can be assessed as effective because the number of registered complaints increased in the first months already, showing that the new system is convenient and understandable to everyone.

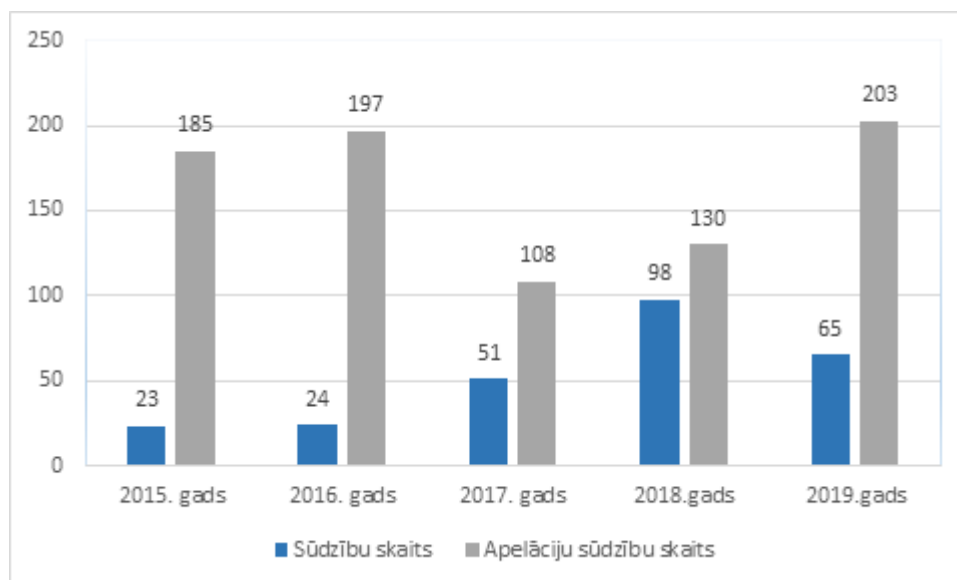


Figure 6. Total number of complaints and appeals registered by RSU in 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019.

Number of complaints	Number of appeals
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In 2018, the structural units registered 98 complaints and 130 appeals. The total number of registered complaints has increased by 47. When assessing the content of complaints, it was found that most complaints were related to infrastructure improvement issues (19 complaints), lecturers' attitude (9 complaints), and study process implementation (8 complaints).

In 2018, the number of appeals has increased by 22 compared to 2017. In the reporting year, there were changing trends compared to 2017 in the structural units where appeals were registered, for example, the number of complaints in the Department of Human Physiology and Biochemistry decreased (41 complaints), whereas in the International Student Department the number of complaints has increased (12 appeals). There are several structural units, where no appeals were submitted in 2018.

In 2019, the structural units registered 65 complaints and 203 appeals. The total number of registered complaints decreased by three. When assessing the content of complaints, it was found that most complaints were related to the attitude of the teaching staff (18 complaints), infrastructure improvement issues (18 complaints), and study process implementation (11 complaints).

In 2019, the number of appeals has increased by 73 compared to 2018. In the reporting year, there were changing trends compared to 2018 in the structural units where appeals were registered, for example, the number of complaints in the Department of Human Physiology and Biochemistry decreased (34 complaints), whereas the number of complaints in the International Student Department has increased (27 appeals). Several structural units did not submit appeals in 2019.

In 2019, one complaint was received in Faculty of Communication (DVS No. 17-7/14/2019, dated 23.01.2019) – appeal concerning exams.

The following mechanisms have been introduced to improve cooperation with students in the study direction:

- each semester, every head of study programme is required to organise several meetings with students;
- students can ask their questions and do it directly to the lecturer (contacts are available in

the course description), head of the study programme, study process manager, heads of departments, dean of the faculty.

- not only the objectives are formulated when starting study courses, but each lecturer informs about the possibilities of consideration of questions, proposals, complaints;
- each lecturer should have a consultation time of 2 hours per week, during which individual issues may be addressed;
- heads of study programmes regularly answer students' questions, they are also discussed at the meetings of the Department of Communication Studies and council of the Faculty of Communication;
- during the meetings, students are encouraged to actively communicate about the study process and content, and heads of the study programmes of the study direction provide answers within one to five days, depending on the question;
- student proposals are discussed with their participation and often implemented during the semester.

2.4. Provide information on the mechanism for collecting the statistical data, as developed by the higher education institution/ college. Specify the type of the data to be collected, the collection frequency, and the way the information is used to improve the study direction.

RSU has developed a system for centralised collection and analysis of key data related to the study process. The system has a clear division of responsibilities for data analysis at various levels (RSU institutional level, study direction and programme levels, faculty and academic structural unit levels and study course level), drawing conclusions and providing feedback on the changes planned and implemented in the study process as a result of the analysis. RSU collects data on general statistical indicators characterising the higher education institution, such as the number of students, student success rate, drop-out rates and its causes, as well as admission results. There is also an in-depth analysis of key indicators.

Statistical data for improvement of the study direction is used as follows:

- Data on the number of students determines decisions on the content of the study programme, management and communication, recommending specific improvements;
- Assessments of the study courses and programmes are discussed in Department meetings and the meeting of FC Council, and these affect decisions related to the content, form, and management of studies;
- Indicators on the number of students determine the strategic development decisions for the study direction, for example, creation of new programmes or introduction of part-time study option;
- Data on study results is used for assessment of study courses and lecturers;
- Data on financial indicators of a study direction is used when making decisions on tuition fee of the study programmes.

Every month, RSU collects the most up-to-date data on the number of students, including student status (active, inactive), type of tuition financing (state budget funds, paid studies). Information about the reasons for student drop-out is collected, compiled, and analysed, which is used to identify necessary improvements in the study programme.

Data on admission results - the number of individuals enrolled in a particular study programme - and the total number of applications is collected, keeping track of the demand for the study programme. The number of students admitted to the study programme is also summarised.

Analysis of study programme quality criteria

For a more in-depth data analysis, quality indicators of study programmes at Rīga Stradiņš University were developed in 2016 that are collected over the academic year. Quality indicators are divided into three levels - institutional level, content level, and individual level. Based on the above levels, 14 quality criteria with 29 quality indicators have been developed. Data on performance of the indicators is collected once a year by the Department of Study Process Quality Analysis of the RSU Centre for Pedagogical Growth in cooperation with other RSU structural units and heads of study programmes. For the purpose of summarising quality indicators, information is obtained and linked from various information systems managed by RSU. Some examples of quality indicators include the quality criterion "Provision of e-Environment", which analyses quality indicators such as timely availability of lecture and class calendar and study course descriptions, as well as timely availability of final exams on the Student Portal. Within the framework of the quality criterion "Academic Achievements", indicators such as the proportion of graduates who have completed the study programme within the planned term and the ratio of the number of lecturers to the number of students are analysed. Within the framework of the quality criterion "Professional Competence and Improvement of Participation", data on the proportion of lecturers with a doctoral degree elected in academic positions and the number of lecturer visits are analysed. Research activity indicators of lecturers and students are also analysed.

Information on the fulfilment of the Quality Indicators is provided to the RSU management, Student Union, Dean's Council, and heads of study programmes.

Collecting and analysing quality indicators allows to understand if and what improvements are required at RSU institutionally, in the study directions, and in individual study programmes. In academic year 2019/2020, a review of the study quality indicators is planned to improve the indicators in line with RSU development.

Analysis of Academic Performance of Students

Student performance is analysed twice per academic year after the end of the autumn and spring semesters. Data on final student assessments are collected and analysed by the Study Quality Analysis Division of the RSU Centre for Educational Growth by faculty and study direction, providing information to the RSU management and data collections to the deans of the faculties.

Data by study programmes is analysed by the heads of the study programmes, and the results of the analysis are reviewed by the study quality council and the faculty council. The conclusions are summarised and included in the annual report on the actions taken to improve the study programme.

In terms of academic structural units, the data is analysed by the heads of the academic structural units, and the results of the analysis are discussed at the structural unit meetings.

The deans of faculties report annually to the Dean's Council on the findings of the performance analysis, sharing their experiences and good practices.

Student feedback analysis

Twice a year, information on students' feedback from study course and study programme assessment questionnaires is collected. Data on questionnaire completion and key indicators is collected and analysed by the Department of Study Process Quality Analysis of the RSU Centre for Pedagogical Growth, reporting results to the RSU management, Student Union, Dean's Council, and heads of study programmes.

Data on the questionnaire results, including student comments given in the questionnaires, are available to heads of academic structural departments, heads of study directions and programmes, as well as lecturers on the RSU Academic Staff portal. Data is analysed at the structural unit meetings and study quality councils. The students are informed about the decisions made both in person and online, using the possibility of electronic feedback on the RSU Academic Staff portal (see 2.2).

Questionnaire results, as well as student performance data, are analysed at structural unit meetings, study programme quality councils, and faculty councils. The heads of study directions report annually on the findings of the questionnaire result analysis to the Deans' Council once a year, in the autumn semester.

2.5. Description and assessment of the integration of the standards set forth in Part 1 of the ESG. Specify which of the standards are considered a challenge and which require special attention.

Compliance of the study programme with Part I of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) in Annex No. 23 "Description and Assessment of the Integration of Standards Included in ESG Part 1".

Increased attention is paid to the following standards:

- Student-centred learning that is ensured via lecturer training and creation of appropriate cooperation forms with students;
- Involvement of external expert examination (for example, Baltic Centre for Media Excellence, Latvian Media Ethics Council, Media Policy Division of the Ministry of Culture, representatives of the media organisations);
- Preparation for a life in a democratic society; study content emphasises and practice of the study process demonstrates meaning and importance of democratic institutions and self-regulation formats;
- Development of personality, ensuring individual approach for students in development of creative and research papers;
- Carefully planned placements during the whole study period.

The following standards create increased challenges:

- Sciences and innovations; lack of financing and other resources (personnel, IT software, technologies, patents, etc.) in the research of the social sciences encumbers compliance with these standards;
- Assurance of the working environment for the teaching staff is problematic due to constant lack of resources (premises, ability to spend a longer time on research) because the financial basis of the direction programmes is formed only by contributions made by natural persons.

II - Description of the Study Direction (3. Resources and Provision of the Study Direction)

3.1. Provide information on the system developed by the higher education institution/ college for determining the financial resources required for the implementation of the study direction and the relevant study programmes. Provide data on the available funding for the relevant study programmes, as well as the sources of the funding for the scientific research and/or artistic creation activities and their use for the development of the study direction. Provide information on the costs per one student (for each relevant study programme of the study direction) by specifying the headings indicated in the calculation of costs and the percentage of the funding among the indicated headings.

Funding of the study programmes is planned by using funds of the private persons and legal entities.

Implementation of the academic Bachelor's study programme "Journalism" is planned as full-time studies (3 years, envisaged total number of students in three years: 43 students; tuition fee per year EUR 1,950).

Implementation of the academic Bachelor's study programme "Public Relations" is planned as full-time studies (3 years, envisaged total number of students in three years: 46 students; tuition fee per year EUR 1,950).

Implementation of the academic Bachelor's study programme "Multimedia Communication" is planned as full-time studies (3 years, envisaged total number of students in three years: 115 students; tuition fee per year EUR 1,990).

Implementation of the academic Bachelor's study programme "Photography" is planned as full-time studies (3 years, envisaged total number of students in three years: 30 students; tuition fee per year EUR 1,790).

Implementation of the academic Master's study programme "Communication and Media Studies" is planned as full-time studies in 2 years with the envisaged total number of students being 20; the determined tuition fee per year EUR 2,000.

Implementation of the academic Master's study programme "Strategic Management and Public Relations" is planned as full-time studies in 2 years with the envisaged total number of students being 41; the determined tuition fee per year EUR 2,000.

Implementation of the Doctoral study programme "Communication Culture and Multimedia" is planned to last 3 years with the determined tuition fee of EUR 2,000 per year; the envisaged number of students during the whole study period is 34.

Funding is used for personnel remuneration, attraction of visiting lecturers, taxes, maintenance of IT infrastructure, purchase of equipment and machinery. In addition to direct costs for implementation of lectures and classes, the study programme must also cover infrastructure maintenance costs (premises, IT solutions) and other common resources of RSU used for the study programme (Student Service, Library, organisation of the study process, a grant for the student

self-government and other support and administrative functions).

Study programmes will be implemented by the Language Centre, Division of Doctoral Studies, Department of Humanities, Centre for Pedagogical Growth, Department of the Communication Studies, Department of Sociology and Psychology, Department of Clinical Skills and Medical Technologies. The total annual budget of these Departments for the higher education is 1.0 million EUR. It is expected that the total budget of these Departments will increase by 3.3% during the first year due to increased revenue.

Information on student costs

Title	Average costs per student, EUR	Academic personnel, %	Department resources, %	Other direct costs, %	Fixed costs, %	Overhead costs, %
Academic Bachelor's study programme "Journalism"	1,903	41%	4%	19%	9%	27%
Academic Bachelor's study programme "Public Relations"	1,823	39%	4%	16%	10%	30%
Academic Bachelor's study programme "Multimedia Communication"	1,507	36%	3%	14%	12%	35%
Academic Bachelor's study programme "Photography"	1,766	38%	2%	24%	10%	26%
Academic Master's study programme "Communication and Media Studies"	1,892	42%	1%	21%	9%	27%
Academic Master's study programme "Strategic Management and Public Relations"	1,399	31%	4%	16%	12%	36%
Doctoral study programme "Communication Culture and Multimedia"	1,717	37%	8%	15%	10%	30%

A wide selection of RSU material and technical base is available for implementation of study courses allowing the booking of study premises and computer classrooms in the common system.

Research is ensured as follows:

- RSU internal grants;
- RSU funding for researcher places (two places in FC);
- Post-doctoral research;
- Participation in state research competitions and research project competitions of the Latvian Council of Science;
- Participation as a coordinator or a partner in international research programmes (Horizon 2020, Cost Action, Erasmus+, projects of scientific institutions of various countries);
- Projects of the Latvian institutions (Ministry of Culture, etc.);
- Individual projects of researchers.

3.2. Provide information on the infrastructure and the material and technical provision required for the implementation of the study direction and the relevant study programmes. Specify whether the required provision is available to the higher education institution/ college, availability to the students, and the teaching staff (the specific equipment required for the relevant study programme shall be indicated in Part III, Chapter 3 below the respective study programme).

Access to a safe wireless network *Eduroam WiFi* is provided in all buildings of RSU. Students may connect to the *Eduroam* wireless network using their username and password. *Eduroam* is available in 36 European countries, as well as in Australia, the United States, and Canada. RSU students may also use open access computers with provided access to the student systems and internet resources. Multimedia projectors are available in 140 training rooms for use of audiovisual materials for studies; most of these are high-resolution interactive projectors that are connected to a sound system. *Panopto* video recording system is used for the preparation of audiovisual training materials, whereas video conferencing system is used to provide online lectures. A centralised management system of the multimedia equipment of lecture rooms has also been established. Also, 10 computer rooms with more than 200 work stations that are used both for the implementation of certain study courses, as well as for provision of electronic examinations and other types of knowledge testing are available for the needs of study process.

RSU offers the students an opportunity to use *Office365*, providing an option to use a full *Microsoft Office*, *OneDrive* file storage without additional fee. While the student studies at RSU, they have access to all software necessary for successful study process. The student can install *Microsoft Office* software – *Word*, *Excel*, *PowerPoint*, *OneNote*, on five computers (*PC* or *Mac*) and five mobile devices (for example, a smartphone, laptop, and tablet computer). Student may use *OneDrive* of 1 TB for automatic synchronisation of devices.

RSU students and academic staff are already provided with a well-developed IT infrastructure and virtual study environment. RSU students and academic staff have access to e-studies environment with study materials and student assessments, Student portal containing the necessary study information and e-services, Academic Staff portal containing information on academic staff, academic structural units, register of study courses and study programmes, survey system, and feedback.

RSU IT Department is a structural unit of RSU, one of the aims of which is implementation of advanced strategy for the information technology infrastructure. IT Department develops RSU e-services and ensures running thereof.

The physical IT infrastructure of RSU consists of the following:

- 1) RSU computer network located in 10 buildings, connections thereof, with a total of 3,142 network connection ports, 176 wireless network access points, including provision of a wireless network at the student hostels;
- 2) RSU data centre infrastructure located at Dzirciema iela 16 and Anniņmuižas bulvāris 26a, 43 physical servers, three reserved disk arrays, *VMware* virtual server infrastructure with more than 100 virtual servers, backup power supply system, cooling, data backup infrastructure;
- 3) IT equipment and systems monitoring system *Nagios*, *HP IMC*, *MS SCCM* with more than 800 monitored devices and services;
- 4) *Lync* telephone infrastructure maintenance and support – 300 connections;
- 5) *Panopto* video lecture recording system, where about 100 records of lectures are made per month;
- 6) video conferencing system for ensuring online lectures, with an average of 120 remote lectures ensured per study year;
- 7) e-mail system maintenance – *Exchange* for the staff, ensuring management of calendar and contacts; cloud service *Office 365* is provided for students;
- 8) *MS Active directory* based maintenance of electronic identity management infrastructure (one username and password for all IT systems maintained in a centralised way);
- 9) maintenance of the file server;
- 10) servicing of computerised workstations and computer classrooms (1,444 computers, 526 printing equipment units, scanners, and other equipment);
- 11) maintenance of training room equipment – 133 stationary equipped rooms, 179 projectors, including performance of scheduled maintenance of equipment;
- 12) training rooms are provided with the necessary on-site support for recording of video lectures, online lectures and lectures held in rooms with a complicated multimedia equipment; a specialist of the IT service centre ensures on-site technical support;
- 13) administration of self-service photocopying/printing/scanning system.

In order to ensure continuous availability of IT resources in the study process, IT service centre has been established with open hours on working days from 7:30 to 20:00 and on Saturdays from 8:00 to 14:00.

In order to ensure the infrastructures necessary for implementation of the study programmes, improvement of the informative and technical provision in accordance with the development needs of the study programmes, an IT development working group has been established consisting of academic and administrative staff. The IT development working group reviews suggestions on development of new IT systems and improvement of the existing ones. At the same time, physical IT infrastructure is planned in accordance with the requests of structural units, evaluating the load of the current infrastructure during the development of RSU budget.

In order to achieve the above-mentioned aims, IT Department is granted budget each year in accordance with the long-term IT development plan. A large part of the funding is directed towards long-term investments in fixed assets, including system software. More than 30% of the annual IT budget is directed towards development, which includes long-term investments in network and server infrastructure, equipment, and software.

IT services, hardware, network and peripheral equipment are evaluated as excellent; yet it should be taken into account that upgrades are necessary in order to ensure efficiency of study processes. For example, for the students from various study programmes to be able to use knowledge, skills, and competences obtained during the study process to solve cases, it is necessary to develop RSU library of audiovisual study materials (repository of training objects) that would support approach of case studies and analysis in studies and inter-disciplinary aspect. In addition, it is necessary to upgrade the student portal by implementing an internationally recognised solution that includes a mobile application providing an option to work at the student portal, improved experience of portal use, an option to integrate functions from current RSU information systems in the portal, as well as built-in integration with *Office 365*, *Primo* search tool, email, calendar, and other applications. In order to manage the study programme more efficiently, it is necessary to develop a new mapping system of study programmes.

The current list of IT services is available on the RSU [website](#).

3.3. Provide information on the system and procedures for the improvement and purchase of the methodological and informative provision. Description and assessment of the availability of the library and the databases to the students (including in digital environment) and their compliance with the needs of the study direction by specifying whether the opening times of the library are appropriate for the students, as well as the number/ area of the premises, their suitability for individual studies and research work, the services provided by the library, the available literature for the implementation of the study direction, the databases available for the students in the respective field, the statistical data on their use, the procedures for the replenishment of the library stock, as well as the procedures and options for the subscription to the databases.

When commencing studies, each student is assigned a username and, using the self-service services, the student can obtain and reset the password, which can be used for RSU IT systems intended for students. Students use two main sites: the Student portal and the e-studies, together referred to as MyRSU. MyRSU contains all necessary information about studies and the process thereof, as well as different services provided by the university: electronic schedules of classes, final course assessments, application forms, information about finances, RSU student's private email inbox and access to Office 365, self-service printing management (printing, scanning, photocopying), questionnaires for assessment of the study course and programmes, study course descriptions, application for receipt of a written statement regarding the student's status, documents regulating the studies (internal and external laws and regulations), online databases, current information on student life. The e-Databases section of MyRSU portal provides students with access to electronic databases such as EBSCO, Ebook Central (ProQuest) etc. from anywhere. In the e-studies environment, students have access to e-study courses that the student is studying or has studied. A variety of study materials and video lecture recordings are published for e-study courses, tests are organised, written submissions are submitted, and student knowledge is assessed, so that all student assessments, including intermediate grades, are available in the e-study courses.

RSU converged e-environment uses open source learning management platform Moodle, on the website (hereinafter referred to as e-studies). E-studies environment or Moodle platform is used as a tool for the organisation of study process in each study course – for placement of various materials, execution of tests and homework, checking the originality (plagiarism), and publication of assessments. Additionally, e-studies environment provides both the calendar of upcoming events

and latest RSU news and discussion forums, as well as study materials and all the latest information on what the lecturer of the study course wishes to deliver to the students – various assignments, test examples, useful additional materials, etc. By June 2019, MyRSU platform will be linked to the Moodle platform, so downloading the Moodle app to one's phone will allow students to access courses and course materials, as well as grades more easily from their smartphone or tablet.

Students' e-studies environment provides access not only to the courses of the current semester, but also the courses studied in previous semesters, and the content of previous courses as it is for the students of the current semester. Courses of the previous semesters are kept exactly the same as they were when the student studied this course. RSU e-studies are available 24 hours a day from any location with internet access, including from mobile phones.

In the e-studies environment, students have access to information on the study course, its topics, and the results to be achieved. Most of the e-courses contain the necessary study materials and provide links to external information resources. In some courses, interactive video lectures are created, the recordings of which can be found in the respective course in the e-studies environment. In addition, e-studies also allow to host an online conference where the lecturer and students can meet virtually on their computers while not being located in the same place. The recordings of these online virtual audience meetings can also be watched later in the e-studies course. In some of the courses in the e-studies environment, students can also find electronic tests for successful learning of the study course, which allows the students not only to assess their knowledge quickly and in high quality, but also use the self-test method to learn the course contents. All student papers are submitted to the lecturer-created Turnitin assignment, which not only facilitates the collection of papers, but the system also automatically checks the originality of the paper, providing a full report of content plagiarism. The tool has the option of creating sections and comment templates, as well as for students to submit and rate one another (peermark assignment). Checking for plagiarism is possible when comparing a paper to the work of other students (both at RSU and other higher education institutions in Latvia and in the world that use Turnitin), the Internet resources that are freely available to everyone, and journals, other publications, and resources included in the Turnitin database.

In each e-studies course, the lecturer can electronically record student attendance at lectures and classes, and the attendance data automatically appears in the e-grades section, providing a more convenient overview of student performance in the course. The e-studies environment is also used as a tool, with the help of which it is possible to register remotely for elective courses, apply for placement, consultations, examination times, and other events. As of 2019, a new system of elective courses is in operation. Students will apply through the Student portal (MyRSU) rather than through the e-studies. Lecturers and administrative staff have access to the Course Dashboard, which provides information on the e-studies courses they are responsible for, such as whether the lecturer has made editorial changes; whether materials have been imported from the previous semester course, and other useful features. For the academic staff, the e-studies environment serves not only as a location for publishing study materials and organising examinations in relation to their study courses, but also as a place where they can improve their own knowledge. The e-studies environment not only provides access to manuals on how to do various things with Moodle platform, but also makes it possible to apply for various trainings and career development courses organised by the RSU Centre for Educational Growth. The range of offered courses is broad, allowing to improve both the digital and communication and speaking skills. New ways to use Moodle are being introduced, for example, for the development of various projects, publishing public materials, including video and other materials of the scientific conference, scientific interest groups, MITC and RAKUS individual work sites, etc.

Library

The library open access loan is available to RSU students and staff 24/7, for other users the working hours are as follows: from Monday to Friday 8:30-19:00, on Saturdays 10:00-17:00. Total area of the library premises – 2,282 m², including service areas of readers – 1,498 m². Library users have access to 308 reader places, 89 computer workplaces, and wireless Internet access. Well-equipped, vast premises are available on the first floor of the library in the Open Access Loan, which provide the possibility to get all loan books for home use, using self-service equipment. Open access loan also includes reading rooms for group work and individual work. In order to provide access to RSU facilities for students and other visitors with reduced mobility, a lift was opened in the central building of the university's library in December 2018, allowing the library users to move from floor to floor. The library is located in the main RSU building (Rīga, Dzirciema iela 16, building G, second floor), it has three branches:

- two in Riga: At the RSU Red Cross Medical College, Information Centre for Latvian Healthcare Specialists (J. Asara iela 5) and Medical Education Technology Centre (Anņīņmuižas bulv. 26a);
- one in Liepāja: RSU Liepāja Branch Library (Rīņķu iela 24/26).

Services offered by the library

Information on the services, resources, service points, and other questions can be found in the Library section of RSU website in [Latvian](#) and [English](#).

RSU library offers a wide range of printed and electronic information resources, consultations and training in information literacy on searching of printed works, electronic and other information, as well as searching of information according to thematic requests. Books and other information resources for work at home may be received at the library, and the newest study and scientific literature is available in reading rooms. Students and other users of the library may use both the computers of the library and work with their own electronic devices by using Wi-Fi. Information Centre of the library offers filing and lamination services. Study books and methodological materials published by RSU Publishing House may be purchased at the library.

Every year, environment of the library is gradually improved and upgraded; new technologies and services are introduced (self-service equipment with possibilities for users to issue the books to themselves, return the books, extend the period of use, view the user account, as well as print, copy, scan by using multifunctional equipment).

Literature available at the library

Resources of the Information Centre of the library are freely available to any RSU student and lecturer. The collection has been formed in accordance with the Universal Decimal Classification (UDC). Collection of the library consists of approximately 572, 926 physical units, including approximately 261, 934 books (data as at 1 January 2020). Library resources are regularly supplemented with both new procurements and donations corresponding to the profile.

Financing for the purchase of resources increases rapidly each year (see Table 3) and it was approximately EUR 30 per user of the library in 2018.

Table 3. Library financing for creation of the collection and provision of resources over the last five

years

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Assigned financing (EUR)	310,000	276,800	305,200	344,600	350,400	433,400

Approximately 70–75% of the budget intended for assembly of the collection are used for subscription to electronic resources. The subscribed databases provide access to approximately 269,000 subscribed electronic resource units (around 80% of these are e-books).

Tulkojums uz angļu valodu 3.1. nodaļai tiks iesniegts papildinformācijas iesniegšanas laikā.

Finansējums komunikācijas u.c. nozaru grāmatu iegādei ir no bibliotēkas kopējā finansējuma (skat. 4. tabulu).

4.tabula. Finansējums komunikācijas u.c. nozaru grāmatu iegādei (EUR).

Gads	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Komunikācija	679	685	1776	906	869	1154
Žurnālistika	634	185	201	180	349	146
Publicitāte. Reklāma. Sabiedriskās attiecības. Vadībiznātne.	324	480	571	890	474	460
Psiholoģija	1078	1542	2044	1837	3845	2392
Socioloģija. Sociālā psiholoģija	1431	1136	2484	1575	1909	2499

Databases of the respective field available to the students, statistics of the use thereof

25 online databases are available to the students: Ebook Central (ProQuest), EBSCO eBook Academic Collection, Sage Journals, Health Research Premium Collection (Proquest), MEDLINE Complete (EBSCO), Communication Source (EBSCO), Sociology Source Ultimate (EBSCO), Wiley Online Journals, PsycARTICLES, collection of Science Direct journals, SCOPUS, Web of Science, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global: The Sciences and Engineering Collection, Encyclopedia Britannica Academic Edition, Letonika, LETA news archive, Nozare.lv etc. (see <https://www.rsu.lv/biblioteka/resursi>). Subscribed multidisciplinary databases Ebook Central (ProQuest) and EBSCO eBook Academic Collection offer e-books in different fields and from different publishers that provide selected information results searching by various topics / keywords.

In general, the level of usage of these databases is high. It is evaluated once a semester. Statistics indicators of usage tend to increase. For example, the use of Ebook Central (ProQuest) database increased 1.4 times in 2018 compared to 2017, while the use of Sage Journals database increased 1.2 times.

Procedure for supplementation of the library collection and procedure for database subscriptions

RSU has introduced and library implements the support process determining how to provide RSU StP and scientific research activity with the necessary sources of information and services at the library. Process description defines the following: 1) planning of the purchase of information sources, evaluation and supplementation of provisions, and 2) identification of the user satisfaction level (identification of user satisfaction level and improvement activities; organisation of surveys, and analysis of results).

Subscription of databases takes place after trial periods, statistics of usage, and analysis of user feedback. In case of a positive decision by the library council, database is advanced for the budget plan.

In order to improve correspondence of the library collection to the needs of students, work is carried out with the course bibliography, information system data analysis on the issued items, as well as cooperation with the academic staff in order to inform them on the situation with the provision of course literature and to promote e-resources, while the users can electronically complete a questionnaire with suggestions for supplementation of the collection.

Digitalisation level of the library collection, data availability in the digital environment of the higher education institution

The Primo unified search engine is used for management of e-resources, which ensures quick and rationalised search in RSU's subscribed e-resources, in the electronic joint catalogue of five libraries of national significance, in the databases created by the library, and in open access e-resources of the Primo Central collection. Information on the subscribed databases is available also from the RSU Student portal MyRSU.

Information available on the library website: joint catalogue of the libraries of national significance, including the electronic RSU catalogue, databases formed by the library, and information collected by the library staff on the available open access e-resources.

You can follow the news and current events of the library on Twitter account @RSUbibl, as well as Facebook profile "Rīgas Stradiņa universitātes bibliotēka".

Updating the informational support

Users are offered various types of electronic resources: databases of scientific articles, databases of e-books, databases of bibliographical and quotation information of publications, databases of news and reference, as well as information on available open access e-resources summarised by the library staff. The library offers trials of new databases each year.

In order to ensure a high-quality range of services and information resources for university studies and scientific work, services will be developed – support of library specialists to researchers, continuing the creation of video guides in *Panopto* software on the new library resources and services, training programmes in media literacy will be improved and supplemented, digitalisation of part of the collection has started (theses and synopses), it is planned to increase the supply of e-resources according to financial possibilities of RSU and in cooperation with the council of the Latvian Academic Network.

The collection for the informational provision of the study programme is gradually being developed and supplemented, as well as it is possible to use the existing collection, which is constantly being assembled for many years:

- 1) all literature requested by the lecturers of the programme is ordered;
- 2) the latest books on social sciences published in Latvia are purchased on a regular basis;
- 3) it is possible to use the necessary literature in other fields of science (political science, psychology, research methods, first aid, etc.)

The study direction of Information and Communication Science is well provided with e-resources. E-books in communication science and journalism are available in two subscribed e-book databases - ebook Academic Collection (EBSCO) and Ebook Central (Proquest). For example, there are 7,526 books on the topic "communication" in the ebook Academic Collection (EBSCO). Full texts of scientific articles are available in subscribed databases: Communication Source (EBSCO), Academic Search Complete (EBSCO), Sociology Source Ultimate (EBSCO), Wiley Online Library, Sage Journals, Science Direct.

RSU library has been accredited several times as a library of national significance (one of the seven libraries of national significance), and the current accreditation of the Ministry of Culture for five years was received in November 2016. As of 1998, RSU library has been appointed as the main library of the medical sector in the country by a document of the Cabinet of Ministers. RSU library also actively participates in the fulfilment of criteria of the Quality Management System in accordance with the ISO 9001:2015 standard and organises work in accordance with the process description "Provision of Information Sources and Services at the Library", version 7, established within the framework of the quality management system. Work of the library is regularly assessed by internal and external quality auditors, and the assessment results usually are positive. In recent years, the library has received both the Annual Award of the Student Union (to show satisfaction of students with the quality of the resources and services) and Annual Award of RSU administration as the best RSU structural unit.

The library's resources and services can be evaluated as good and meet the demand of students and teaching staff to ensure successful completion of the respective study course. Surveys of both students and teaching staff in 2017 and 2018 confirm a good and very good assessment in the area of information resources. In the case of study literature in Latvian, a more often reissue of some publications, as it is done abroad, would be desirable, if the edition is in high demand. It would be also desirable for publishers to ensure study e-books in Latvian for use in the library network. RSU provides full financial support for assembling the collection of the library according to the written requests of the academic staff to the library, as the teaching literature is compiled according to the library regulations upon a written initiative of the academic staff. The bibliography in course descriptions is also supplemented and updated by the teaching staff and should be coordinated with the library so that the necessary additions to the bibliography can be at the same time actually ordered for the library collection. Mostly this is the case, but not in all cases. The library's self-service reading rooms in the central building and branches have boxes with forms where students can write the necessary literature they lack for studies or additional literature so that it can be added to the collection quickly. We only receive two to three requests per month, which we also try to fulfil if the publication is available on the sales network. This shows that the satisfaction is high and the library has a dialogue with students. The library also actively cooperates with the Student Union, and this year there have been no problems, shortcomings that should have been addressed.

3.4. Provide information on the procedures for attracting and/or employing the teaching staff (including the call for vacancies, employment, election procedure, etc.), and the assessment of their transparency.

When developing a new study programme, academic and scientific staff in compliance with provisions of Section 55, Paragraph 1, Clause 3 of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (LIHE) and Law on Scientific Activity is involved for its provision. Academic and pedagogical staff with high qualification, relevant competences, and good reputation are involved in the implementation of the study direction and achievement of results.

Application and selection procedure of the academic staff at RSU is regulated by the Regulations of Rīga Stradiņš University on Academic Staff Positions and Rīga Stradiņš University Process "Elections of Academic Staff".

Table 5. Organisation of staff recruitment at RSU

Stages of staff recruitment	Performer and person involved
Information of a new vacancy or vacated position at a structural unit. Necessity for the recruitment of staff is analysed	Head of the structural unit, Collegial institution
Receives information on the vacancy	Human Resources Department
Defines the requirements profile of the position: develops the list of requirements and competences necessary to achieve the aim of fulfilling the position	Head of the structural unit, Collegial Institution, Human Resources Department
Agree on the type of candidate recruitment and selection	Head of the structural unit, Human Resources Department
Prepares and validates the advertisement of vacancy	Head of the structural unit, Human Resources Department
Vacancy advertisement is published depending on the requirements and vacancy status: on the RSU website, official publisher "Latvijas Vēstnesis", Euraxess portal of the European Commission, social media	Human Resources Department
Summarises and evaluates candidate applications	Head of the structural unit, Collegial Institution, Human Resources Department
Depending on requirements and status of the vacancy: organises selection interviews, collects references, involves in the process of practical examinations, organises meetings of the collegial institutions	Head of the structural unit, Collegial Institution, Human Resources Department
Elections take place; the most suitable applicant is elected and is offered a job	Head of the structural unit, Collegial Institution, Human Resources Department

During the process of staff selection, competences, professional skills and self-motivation level of the potential employee are evaluated. The international orientation of RSU requires very good

knowledge of English, while the ever increasing share of IT systems in the processes requires excellent digital skills and systematic thinking. Applicants to RSU academic positions are set higher scientific, educational qualification requirements, organisational and professional competences than specified by the requirements of external laws and regulations; thus, the best possible specialists are recruited for the work.

Competitions for academic and scientific positions, as well as general staff positions are announced openly – on the RSU website, in the “Latvijas Vēstnesis” portal, in specialised portals of job advertising (CV-online, etc.), if necessary also on international online sites of job advertising, thus giving an opportunity to any interested person to apply for work at RSU within a month after posting the vacancy. In order to recruit applicants of a specific area or narrow specialisation, other methods of recruitment may be used in addition, for example, dissemination of information via social media sites (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.).

Application documentation, submitted recommendations, previous scientific activities, as well as an open lecture, practical seminar, laboratory work or other type of class organised, prepared and led by the applicant and with participation of students is evaluated in relation to applicants to academic positions.

Qualification and competences of the academic staff are constantly improved by ensuring growth of educational skills, improvement of English, and professional training related to the particular field.

Official language knowledge of the academic staff fully complies with Cabinet Regulation No. 733 of 07.07.2008 “Regulations Regarding the Amount of the Knowledge of the Official Language and the Procedures for Examination of the Knowledge of the Official Language for the Performance of Professional Duties and Duties of Office, Receipt of the Permanent Residence Permit and Obtaining of the Status of a Long-term Resident of the European Union and the State Fee for Examination of the Fluency in the Official Language” RSU Human Resources Department checks the official language skills when selecting the staff, as well as while summarising documents during the preparation process of academic election.

Heads of structural units pay particular attention to succession issues and interaction between staff of different generations. In order to improve the content of the study programme, as well as to introduce innovative methods in study processes, RSU involves foreign visiting academic staff.

The process of recruitment and evaluation of lecturers is transparent, effective and one of the preconditions for high quality of the study process.

At the study programme level, the duty of the head of the study programme is to ensure compliance of the content of the study programme with internal and external laws and regulations, requirements of the labour market, sectoral development trends and needs of students, to analyse data that might provide information on factors affecting results and quality of the study programmes, and to implement necessary improvements to the study programmes. At the study programme level, quality indicators of the study programmes are measured that are directly linked to remuneration of the heads of the study programmes. This aspect promotes taking responsibility and motivates the heads of the study programmes to achieve higher defined quality standards.

At RSU level, the duty of the management is to set strategic and quality aims and quality policy, to make a decision on quality approach, to manage resources, and determine the internal procedures. Supervision of the system introduced by RSU is performed by both the internal system and quality auditors and independent external experts. At the university level, one of the indicators of study quality is the public attitude and opinion, as well as the popularity of RSU. It is regularly established by participating in a reputation survey and evaluation of brands.

3.5. Specify whether there are common procedures for ensuring the qualification of the academic staff members and the work quality in place and provide the respective assessment thereof. Specify the options for all teaching staff members to improve their qualification (including the information on the involvement of the teaching staff in different activities, the incentives for their involvement, etc.). Provide the respective examples and specify the way the added value of the possibilities used for the implementation of the study process and the improvement of the study quality is evaluated.

For the lecturers involved in the study direction and programme implementation, the teaching load is planned according to the study plan of each academic year and study semester. Study courses can be organised in modules and the load is reviewed according to necessity and regulations. RSU promotes a balanced workload for lecturers, and promotes a healthy lifestyle to reduce and eliminate the risk of burnout for teaching staff.

Academic and research activities at RSU are carried out by distinguished and highly regarded permanent employees elected to academic positions. In order to ensure comprehensive knowledge and skills appreciated by the labour market, educational staff performing the duties as the teaching staff only for a certain time are involved in addition to the permanent staff. The staff includes industry experts and teaching staff elected in other higher education institutions etc.

Annex 6.2 provides biographies of the teaching staff attached electronically (Curriculum Vitae in Europass format). Annex 6.1 (in Excel format) provides basic information on the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study direction, specifying their degree/qualification, election status at the higher education institution, study programmes and study courses, in the implementation of which they participate, and certification of knowledge of the official language and foreign language (if applicable).

The academic staff application and selection procedure at RSU is regulated by internal regulations:

- 1) RSU Regulations on Academic Positions;
- 2) RSU Process "Academic Staff Elections";
- 3) Regulations on the Procedure of Inviting Visiting Lecturers to Rīga Stradiņš University.

Qualification for an academic position takes place according to the requirements set for the job in the Law on Institutions of Higher Education, the tasks of academic positions defined in the RSU Constitution and the RSU's election process on the basis of the individual's:

- education,
- experience,
- competences,
- potential,
- achievements,
- scientific contribution,
- teaching skills,
- service record,
- recommendations of experts and industry representatives.

The career development of academic staff is one of the main ways, how RSU can affect the renewal of human resources for research and studies. RSU invests considerable amounts of own funds into the maintenance of the remuneration and motivation system. Pursuant to the Strategy, RSU supports further education and career development of academic staff by implementing various support measures and providing different incentive tools to the academic staff:

- the RSU Centre for Educational Growth provides the possibility to improve skills in university teaching, education technology, and education management areas (see below for details);
- RSU has formal lifelong learning support activities in place – the RSU staff receives material support for continuing studies (in the form of a tuition fee discount) and is offered the possibility to attend courses at the RSU Open University;
- in 2015, RSU started Project for the Improvement of English Language Skills of RSU Staff as an Additional Motivation Tool, and in the course of its implementation, language skills of the academic staff are audited, and training is provided to improve their English from A2 to B2 level. Full compliance of English language skills with the goal set by RSU – level B2 – enables to get a higher remuneration rate for work in English; remuneration rate for work in English; sustainable development of the English language skills during the next years will be implemented also within the framework of the project “Capacity Building of Rīga Stradiņš University Academic Staff” (No. 8.2.2.0/18/A/013) and project “Improvement of the Management Process and Study Content Modernization at Rīga Stradiņš University” (No. 8.2.3.0/18/A/011);
- the Performance Management System introduced in RSU in 2011 envisages cycles of evaluation of performance indicators, discussions between the superiors and employees on the results achieved, employee’s career and qualification development plans and opportunities. Based on the results of these interviews, at the time of preparation of the budget, managers plan support measures for the improvement of specific professional skills and knowledge of their employees – courses, seminars, conferences, experience exchange activities organised in Latvia or abroad, or career development in terms of position change;
- once in 2 years, RSU organises an employee satisfaction and participation survey, including in order to learn the opinion of employees on important factors to ensure sustainable growth of RSU, and recommendations of employees to the extent possible are integrated in practical actions and taken into account in decision-making.

RSU Centre for Educational Growth (hereinafter referred to as the CEG) was created in 2014 for the improvement of the quality of studies and competence of university lecturers. Within the scope of its operations, the CEG provides support in the improvement of the quality of studies by analysing the study process and organising pedagogical growth of academic staff in continuing education activities according to current needs.

The training offered by the CEG is implemented pursuant to Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 569 “Regulations of Education and Professional Qualification Needed by Teachers and Procedure of Improvement of Professional Competence of Teachers”, where continuing education of university lecturers is defined as a mandatory targeted activity for strengthening of academic capacity. Learning activities of the Centre are based in four content areas – education management, didactics of a higher education institution, information and communication technology skills, general skills –

and until now these have been implemented in various forms appropriate for learning the content – thematic cycles, lectures, workshops and other interactive forms. Within the framework of one semester, approximately 30 thematic cycles are implemented for the total of 250 academic hours on average with participation of 80 RSU structural units on average. Interest in offered activities continues to increase. During the last three years, CEG learning activities have registered more

than 2,000 participants, and the number dynamics shows a trend to grow.

Teaching staff involved in implementation of study programmes included in the study direction of information and communication science have access to the whole content of the further education of the Centre for Pedagogical Growth which is updated each semester. Contribution to the quality of the study process is provided by the fact that thematical studies are attended not only by the teaching staff, but also the support personnel involved in organisation of the study process in order to promote pedagogical understanding of the study process and strengthen effective cooperation with the students. Each semester of the academic year is offered a relevant content in various process forms corresponding to the research of the lecturers' needs.

Further education activities for the teaching staff implemented in the autumn semester of 2019 saw participation from 27 lecturers which teach the study courses in the study direction of information and communication science studies; these lecturers attended 17 various activities.

When planning the content, volume, form of process offered for further education of the teaching staff, relevant needs of the teaching staff are summarised and analysed once per year; and consequently improvement of the competence of the teaching staff is ensured. Anonymous questionnaires are collected after each training activity to obtain feedback on its quality and possible improvements. In general, the results show a high level of satisfaction which is based on relevance of the content and form of process to the thematical interests of the teaching staff, as well as time availability, infrastructure specifics and other factors.

In order to strengthen the professional skills of the young lecturers in the classroom and to promote their career development, the School of Junior Academics (SJA) was established at RSU in 2019 within the framework of the project Strengthening of the Academic Staff of Rīga Stradiņš University (No. 8.2.2.0/18/A/013). The SJA was established, based on the research of the needs of RSU academic staff and students and the results of theoretical literature and international practice research. Six thematic directions of lecturer competence development are proposed for learning activities, the transversal motives of which are leadership and ICT skills development:

- 1) student-centred approach in the single higher education area;
- 2) RSU development vision;
- 3) student and lecturer identity;
- 4) organisation of the study process;
- 5) development and implementation of study content;
- 6) internal and external evaluation of study quality.

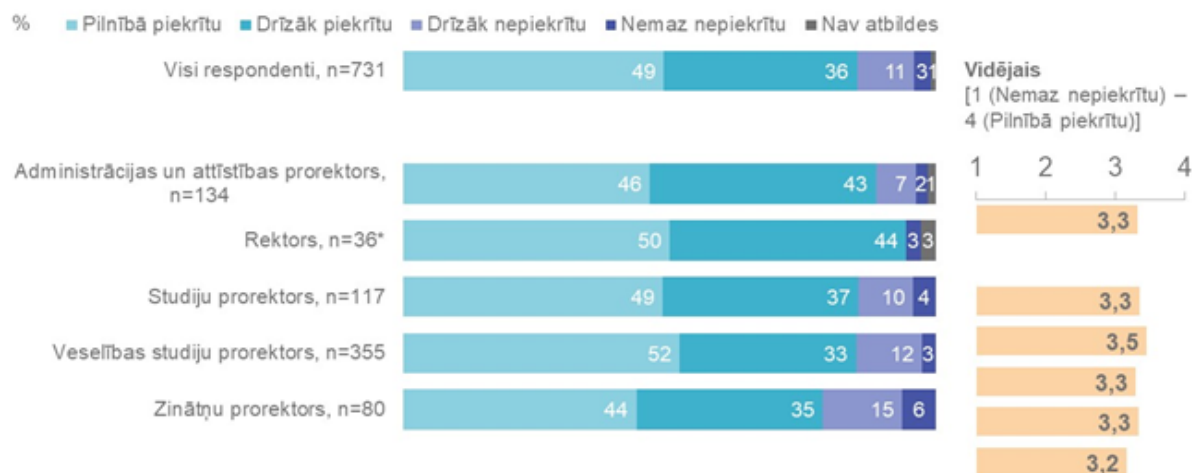
The SJA is conducted over a six-month period with one class per week, covering a total of 46 academic hours. The on-site classes integrate interactive teaching and learning methods, the classes are recorded in video format, and an e-studies environment has been created, so that the learning process of young lecturers is not tied to physical environment, but people have the option to study in person or online in a convenient place and time. The learning process is strengthened through activities such as e-journal club, class observation, mentoring, supervision, educational games, and reflection portfolio building. The first group of SJA members consists of 20 lecturers from 12 academic structural units, creating an excellent collaboration platform for working together to improve the study quality.

Return on competence improvement measures is reflected in performance improvement of study quality indicators, as well as RSU External reputation assessment, in which RSU has been recognised as the higher education institution with the best reputation in Latvia for the third

successive year in the study conducted by Kantar concerning the largest higher education institutions. Evaluation of the English language learning project in 2019 was included in the questions of RSU Staff satisfaction and involvement questionnaire, receiving a confirmation that 85% of the staff participating in the questionnaire (a total of 731 staff) consider the English language skills testing and learning project as a possibility to improve their qualification.

Angļu valodas zināšanu pārbaude un mācības

Q56. RSU organizēto angļu valodas zināšanu pārbaudi un mācības es vērtēju kā savas kvalifikācijas pilnveides iespēju



KANTAR

Nav statistiski nozīmīgu atšķirību salīdzinot ar RSU kopējo rādītāju

* Respondentu skaits mazs, lai veiktu statistiski nozīmīgus secinājumus (n<50)

1

Whereas, in relation to the question concerning provision of growth for lecturers' competences, most of 367 teaching staff – 86 % - responded positively to the statement "I receive sufficient support for the growth of my pedagogical competence".

RSU studējošo iesaiste un motivācija un studentcentrētas vides pilnveidošana

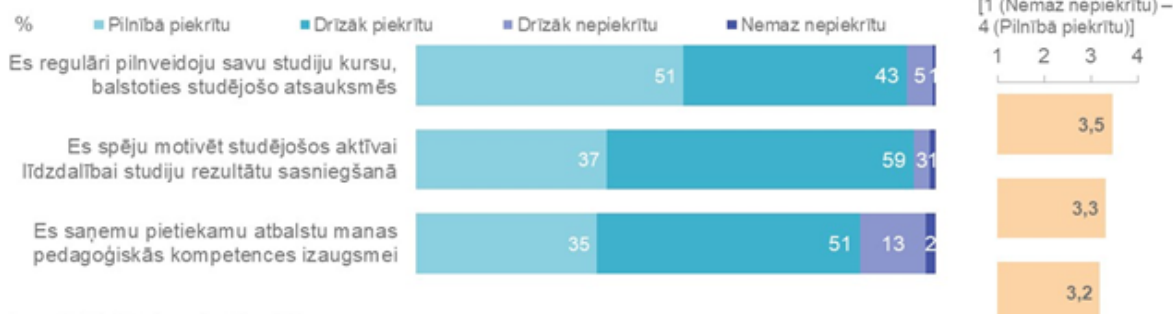
Q60. Rīgas Stradiņa universitātē es strādāju par docētāju (jebkurā statusā – vēlētā akadēmiskā amatā, kā pienākumu izpildītāju vai stundu pasniedzēju) →



Q61 – Q63. Ja Rīgas Stradiņa universitātē Jūs strādājat par docētāju (jebkurā statusā – vēlētā akadēmiskā amatā, kā pienākumu izpildītāju vai stundu pasniedzēju), lūdzam atbildēt uz jautājumiem, kas saistīti ar studējošo iesaistes un motivācijas veicināšanu, kā arī studentcentrētas vides pilnveidošanu ↓

Bāze: Visi respondenti, n=731

50% respondentu RSU strādā par docētāju



KANTAR

2

In general, it may be concluded that systematic, regular activities are conducted to strengthen the capacity of the teaching staff, and the latter appreciate such effort.

3.6. Provide information on the number of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the relevant study programmes of the study direction, as well as the analysis and assessment of the academic and research workload. Provide the assessment of the incoming and outgoing mobility of the teaching staff over the reporting period, the mobility dynamics, and the issues which the higher education institution/ college must tackle with regard to the mobility of the teaching staff.

See Annex No. 6.1 (in Excel format) for basic information on the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study direction.

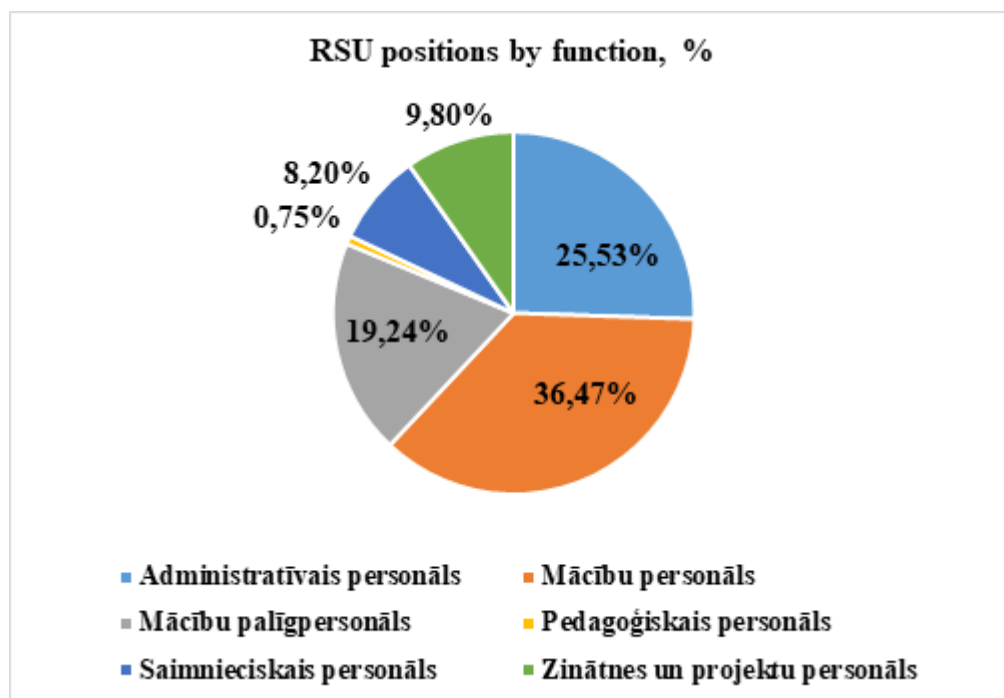
See Annex No. 6.2 for biographies of the teaching staff (in Curriculum Vitae Europass format).

See Annex No. 6.3 for information on incoming and outgoing mobility of teaching staff during the reference period.

The teaching staff involved in the implementation of the Study Direction and study programmes plan their pedagogical workload according to the study programme for each semester and academic year. Individual study courses are organised in modules and the load is reviewed in accordance with the need and provisions of laws and regulations. RSU contributes to a balanced workload and rest for teaching staff and promotes a healthy lifestyle to reduce and eliminate the risk of burnout of teaching staff.

Academic and research activities at RSU are carried out by distinguished and highly regarded permanent employees elected to academic positions. In order to ensure comprehensive knowledge and skills appreciated by the labour market, educational staff performing the duties as the teaching staff only for a certain time are involved in addition to the permanent staff. The staff includes industry experts and teaching staff elected in other higher education institutions etc.

RSU employs general and administrative staff constituting a quarter of the total staff to provide training and study process support functions, to carry out record-keeping and quality management, human resource and financial management, and deal with legal matters. At the same time, the operating staff is responsible for the management of the buildings and the territory, for the development of the infrastructure, and for the operation of the motor transport.



Administrative staff

Teaching staff

Teaching support staff

Pedagogical staff

Operating staff

Scientific and project staff

The implementation of the study direction involves highly qualified lecturers who are experts in the field and specialise in the respective study course topics.

Lecturers, whose qualification and abilities are of high level and assessed over a long period of cooperation, are involved in the realisation of the study direction and programmes, therefore, are not many changes in the staff composition.

Full-time university lecturers are required to participate in research activities that are regulated by staff job descriptions. Depending on the type of academic position, the following proportion of duties and responsibilities of the employee in scientific and research activities has been determined:

- assistants carry out scientific and research work 30% of the working time;
- lecturers carry out scientific and research work 15% of the working time;
- associate professors, associate professors, professors carry out scientific and research work 20% of the working time.

The division of responsibilities within a structural unit may be changed by the head of the structural unit in agreement with the employee, according to the planning of the pedagogical work and the projects to be implemented.

The scientific results of the academic staff are summarised once a year and included in the scientific activity report. For some groups of staff, they are related to the principles of remuneration and motivation. Lecturer achievements are included in their CV.

RSU is constantly planning and implementing activities aimed at motivating the academic staff to engage in high-level scientific and research work, in particular associate professors and professors (aiming to reach 60% of working time spent on research), which will encourage new professionals to engage in industry research, and contribute to the overall development of science at national

and international level.

Description and assessment of the mobility of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study direction during the reported period

Assessment of the outgoing mobility of the teaching staff during the reported period.

Outgoing mobility of the teaching staff of RSU is implemented within the framework of Erasmus+ programme. Cooperation agreements have been signed with other higher education institutions of the European Union, in which equal study programmes to the study content are implemented in order to insure full cooperation. Before leaving for a visit of guest lectures, the teaching staff contact the receiving higher education institution in order to develop the lecture plan of suitable content. Main condition of a guest teaching visit of Erasmus+: the lecturer must provide at least eight academic hours that can be both lectures and seminars. Guest lectures must be read in accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

The opportunities to use the outgoing mobility are widely used each year (see Annex 6.3).

Assessment of the ingoing mobility of the teaching staff during the reported period.

Ingoing mobility of the teaching staff is implemented at RSU mostly within the framework of project activities of ERASMUS+ programme. Conditions of bilateral cooperation agreements provide for exchange of teaching staff between higher education institutions of the European Union implementing study programmes of appropriate content. Prior to receiving the visiting teaching staff, content of lectures is validated, as well as the study cycle of students (of Bachelor's, Master's, or doctoral studies) in order to ensure full attendance of lectures and added value to the current study course.

The incoming mobility of teaching staff during the last six years is two to six lecturers per academic year. (see Annex 6.3).

3.7. Assessment of the support available for the students, including the support provided during the study process, as well as career and psychological support by specifying the support to be provided to specific student groups (for instance, students from abroad, part-time students, distance-learning students, students with special needs, etc.).

RSU student with special needs is a RSU student with functional restrictions requiring adaptation of the study environment and process in order to create equal opportunities to receive the higher education. RSU supports students with special needs in various stages related to studies – selecting a suitable study programme, when enrolling with the higher education institution, and in the study process (study materials, taking examinations, etc.) and creating appropriate social and physical environment (see [on the availability of the METC environment](#)). The aim of the support measure is to promote the independence and inclusion in the study process of the students with special needs. Guidelines and support policy have been developed regarding support to RSU students with special needs (see Annex No. 1.).

Since 2012, all RSU students have access to psycho-emotional support. The service was introduced with the aim of helping students to overcome adaptation problems when starting their studies, reducing the emotional manifestations of stress, stress-related health disorders, psychosomatic disorders or illnesses, overcoming relationship-building difficulties, crisis situations. Human being is a single entity, and only an emotionally stable and balanced student rarely gets sick and achieves

more. The need for the service has been appreciated by both local and international students. The student may choose to attend group or individual visits to the resident physician. The introduction of the service has helped to reduce the number of students who have dropped out of the study process, and has helped to increase the efficiency of study work by reducing students' stress and adaptive disorders.

RSU has a Career Centre. The services of the Centre are available to all RSU students. Individual career counselling are particularly appreciated and sought after, and group counselling is also available. Events organised by the Career Centre on current issues in the labour market, as well as other career and self-development related topics, are regular (weekly) and in demand among the students. Students can post their CVs and get information about job vacancies [on the portal](#). RSU Career Centre provides literature and information materials on career topics that students can read on the spot or take home for reading.

The International Department (ID) provides informational support to the international students which have confirmed their desire to commence studies to ensure their successful and swift integration in RSU and Latvia. The new international students electronically receive an invitation to RSU Orientation Week, informative edition of *Survival Guide*, internal regulations of the higher education institution, as well as other regulatory study documents and a sample of a study contract in Latvian and in English, also information on various accommodation options in Riga, etc. RSU website in English offers wide information on RSU and life in Riga. To make the life of the students easier, the university offers several housing options, including RSU Student Hostel at Dārza Street 5, Riga, which was built by the end of 2017 and opened by the Minister for Health. ID provides support to the citizens of the third countries in settling their immigration procedures.

One week before commencement of each semester, ID organises the Orientation Week, during which international students are informed about the university, studies, evaluation system, rights and duties of students, student e-system, immigration and residence aspects, as well as Latvian culture and language. During the Orientation Week, international students learn of various RSU structural units (for example, Student Services, IT Department, library, departments) and their responsibilities. RSU student organisations – RSU Student Union and International Students' Association – are also involved in the events of the Week. In cooperation with ID, they ensure a culture programme for the new international students.

Mentor programme is maintained as well to assist the newly-admitted international students with adaptation at the higher education institution. The newly enrolled students can contact mentors – local and foreign RSU students who have been studying for several years – even before the new students arrive in Latvia. Before the commencement of each semester, ID organises the informative exhibition providing the opportunity for the new foreign students to obtain information on various RSU student organisations, amateur performer groups, sports club, out-patient clinic and psychosomatic aid clinic, etc.

II - Description of the Study Direction (4. Scientific Research and Artistic Creation)

4.1. Description and assessment of the directions of scientific research and/or artistic creation in the study direction, their compliance with the aims of the higher education institution/ college and the study direction, and the development level of scientific research and artistic creation (provide a separate description of the role of the doctoral

study programmes, if applicable).

In research, RSU acts in accordance with approved strategies; current strategy was developed in 2015: [Development Strategy of RSU Scientific Institution for 2015-2020](#). The strategy is based on all three of the University's key directions of action - internationally competitive education, excellent research, and technology transfer to strengthen innovation as the foundation for RSU's sustainable development.

As a research institution, RSU aims to train highly qualified research staff, support excellent science and efficient technology transfer to foster innovation and increase RSU's global competitiveness. The medium-term objective is to offer and implement extensive academic and professional university education, as well as research opportunities in the following basic fields – medicine, health and social care, teaching, social sciences and natural sciences. (Article 2.2 of RSU Constitution).

In the strategy development process, based on RSU research resources, RSU research was prioritised into three main blocks:

- leading areas of research,
- supporting areas of research,
- new growth areas of research.

The relevant research blocks are based on the availability of resources and the potential for sustainable development, the accumulated experience, the presence of strategic leadership and the importance of the research industry for the overall development of RSU.

The priorities have been selected in the medium term. RSU supports research in all directions of social sciences, which have supportive capacity in the University, and all such research is a priority to strengthen the role of social sciences at the University. The direction has a great untapped potential, especially in close collaboration with leading research and development sectors, providing a critical assessment and alternative views, making a significant contribution to addressing societal challenges. Synergy with health sciences focused on public health promotion. Social innovation is a significant field of synergy, which supports healthy lifestyle, family health, active and healthy ageing.

Table 6. Priorities set out in the strategy for 2015-2020.

<u>Pillars</u>	Clinical medicine	Biomedicine	Rehabilitation	Public health
<u>Research basics</u>	Molecular medicine	Structural biology	Research methodology	Social / cultural / environmental / public health

<u>Leading areas of research</u>	Oncology
	Infectious diseases and immunology
	Occupational diseases
	Occupational and environmental health
	Regenerative medicine, tissue bioengineering
<u>Growth sectors</u>	Technologies of dosage forms (pharmaceuticals)
	Rehabilitation and ageing of the society
	Chronic diseases and therapy algorithms
	Neuroscience / human brain disease research
	Maternal and child health
	Nuclear medicine, radiology and advanced visualization techniques
	Social sciences and humanities
<u>Transversal sectors</u>	Anatomy, embryology, histology, pathology, structural biology
	Anaesthesiology and reanimatology
	Emergency and military medicine
	Health care science
	Public health
	Social policy

Research organisation at the university is determined by the Law on Scientific Activity. The highest collegial body in research is the Research Council. It makes strategic decisions in research and elects scientific staff by secret ballot. At the level of operative administration, management of scientific activity is conducted by Research Board headed by the Vice-Rector for Science.

Annual monitoring in research is ensured by summarising results of scientific activities of the structural units in January of the following year, when each academic and scientific structural unit completes a special report form. Data is summarised and reported in annual scientific conference in March or April, and provided in printed format as RSU Report on Scientific Activities prepared by the end of May for the previous year.

In November of each execution year, information is provided on the implementation execution of internal RSU grants; it is assessed by the evaluation committee, and a decision is made on continuation in the following year and on recommendations for performers.

Monitoring of the research activities at the level of structural units is performed by the heads thereof. Heads of all scientific and academic structural units have supervision of the scientific work

included in their job descriptions.

External funds are attracted for research, as well as RSU internal programmes are used that are funded from RSU resources. Volume of financing for internal research projects is granted during the planning of annual RSU budget. There are several internal financing programmes – grants for doctoral students, RSU internal grants, cooperation grants between higher education institutions, aid to certain projects from the RSU Alumni Association in cooperation with the Boris and Inara Teterev Foundation. For example, total financing at RSU for internal science projects in 2016 was EUR 512,860. (EUR 284,000 were granted for internal grants, EUR 100,000 for RSU and RTU grants, EUR 128,860 for grants to doctoral students).

Scientific activities of the academic staff are partly paid for within the framework of basic salary (depending on type of position, volume of work has been determined for research duties). In accordance with financial possibilities of RSU and topicality of the research direction, RSU supports participation of the academic staff in scientific conferences by assigning a paid period of absence or creative leave. Such a system of research organisation exists throughout the university.

The Social Sciences Platform research strategy is based on the comprehensive [RSU Scientific Institution development strategy 2015-2020](#). The Platform carries out research mainly in the horizontal directions defined by the RSU, which have great potential for expansion and scalability in other RSU research areas and platforms. The main task of the platform as RSU Coordination Unit is to provide excellent research in accordance with the strategy and to promote new development opportunities for specific and perspective research directions such as medical law (in collaboration with RSU Public Health Platform), on the impact of digitalization in different sectors, etc. One of the main research areas of the RSU Social Sciences Platform is international and national legal systems and law: international law and EU law, national and cyber security, medical law, which are emerging fields of research.

The activities of the Social Sciences Platform are coordinated with the national guidelines aimed at the development of science and economics, including the involvement in the National Reform Programs, the Fundamental and Applied Research Programs of Latvian Council of Science, and support for doctoral students. Leading scientists are advisers to state policy makers. Any research conducted within the platform must meet the highest ethical standards and requirements coordinated by RSU.

The Social Sciences Platform also provides RSU doctoral and post-doctoral training, as well as support in the training of qualified academic and research staff. To support scientific activity, the platform's academic and scientific staff teach study courses related to research methodology and organization, including ethical aspects of scientific work. All activities related to doctoral and post-doctoral education, resources and grants for individual doctoral research paper, as well as the entire study programme, are coordinated by the Department of Doctoral Studies of RSU.

Teaching staff involved in the implementation of the Study Direction take part in individual research projects as well as search for and use external grants and projects. The outgoing mobility (Annex 6.3.) shows the research activity of teaching staff, and Annex 6.5 indicates the summary of experience of teaching staff in the field, their participation in projects and conferences.

4.2. The relation between scientific research and/or artistic creation and the study process, including the description and assessment of the use of the outcomes in the study process.

The study content creation processes developed by RSU and the internal logic of the study programme content of the study direction determine the constant connection of research with the study process at all study levels:

- inclusion of research in information and communication science, sociology, social anthropology, law, psychology, management science, computer science, art and other fields, and of research articles in the content of study courses and the list of references;
- use of research data in lectures and seminar discussions, their analysis and discussions on research intentions, their design, methodology, results, correlation of results with other research (e.g. study courses “Research Methods in Social Sciences”, “Qualitative Research Methods”, “Media Audience”, “Mass Communication Theories”, etc.);
- presentation and integration in the study process of research data by lecturers, such as presentations of unique online communication research tools “Internet Aggressiveness Index” and “Saeima Debate Corpus” developed by RSU Department of Communication Studies, training on the use of these tools in different study courses;
- compulsory research assignments related to research (for example, “Course Paper”, “Bachelor’s Thesis”, “Seminar of Bachelor’s Thesis”, “Seminar of Master’s Thesis”, “Master’s Thesis”);
- opportunities for students to join research project teams. For example, Reflection Regarding Values and Action Models During Social and Economical Changes, ECO SOCLV 95; Overcoming the Crisis in Latvia: Economic, Social, and Communication Aspects, RSU ZP 15-103;
- study courses and guest lectures regularly taught by foreign researchers, which is a constant part of the study content;
- lecturers’ suggestions for research topics that include innovative data processing techniques and current topics;
- opportunities to publish the results of the best Bachelor’s and Master’s theses in academic journals and media (e.g. “Akadēmiskā Dzīve” (Academic Life), LSM.lv);
- collaboration with institutions and companies on the development of research (e.g. State Chancellery, airBaltic, Ministry of Culture);
- doctoral students of the study direction regularly present their research and results thereof to the students of the Master’s study programmes (for example, in the study course “Analysis of Communication Situations”);
- a mandatory requirement for developing a Bachelor’s thesis is submitting the research plan thereof in the form of theses to the annual RSU International Student Conference;
- Doctoral students of the study direction are lecturers in the study programmes of the study direction (N. Kozlovs, R. Siliņa, V. Savicka).

The development of the media environment (VR, AR technologies, 360-degree video, networks of things, the need to raise the level of media literacy) suggests developing and improving the content of study programmes mainly in three directions:

- 1) communication and media psychology, cognitive science, and neuroscience;
- 2) media literacy in digital information, network and hybrid communication environments;
- 3) discourse analysis in different spheres of public life.

This would require greater collaboration with other RSU structural units working in areas such as computer science, neuroscience or cognitive or experimental psychology in the context of the university’s strategy. Such interdisciplinary projects are already being announced and developed

both at the Latvian level and in collaboration with researchers from other EU countries.

4.3. Description and assessment of the international cooperation in the field of scientific research and/or artistic creation by specifying any joint projects, researches, etc. Specify those study programmes, which benefit from this cooperation. Specify the future plans for the development of international cooperation in the field of scientific research and/or artistic creation.

International cooperation in scientific research takes place within the framework of international research projects attracted by the lecturers of the study direction, acting as partners in projects of other institutions and implementing individual research projects with the involvement of foreign colleagues. Research opportunities and funding in social sciences are limited, as well as the administrative capacity to conduct research, lecturers' salaries mostly depend on the work with students, therefore, until 2013, the amount of research is considered to be insufficient. Since 2013, lecturers have had more opportunities to apply for RSU internal grants, and two research projects of the National Research Programme and other programmes have been acquired. Two to four applied or fundamental research projects are submitted each year. On February 1, 2019, the position of a Leading Researcher was established at RSU Faculty of Communication. This researcher is responsible for designing scientific research projects, engaging research teams and working on research, preparing research reports and high-level publications.

Table 7. Scientific research projects

Scientific research projects	Study programmes using project data, results, opportunities to participate in projects
· Instituto Universitario Europeo, Assessing the risk for the media pluralism in EU and beyond (2015-2020)	"Journalism", "Multimedia Communication", "Communication and Media Studies", "Public Relations and Strategic Management", "Communication Culture and Multimedia", "Health Communication"
· Varieties of Democracy V - DEM, University of Gothenburg (2015-2019)	"Journalism", "Multimedia Communication", "Communication and Media Studies", "Public Relations and Strategic Management"

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · BRAIN@WORK, National Research Council· Bologna Research Area Library (from 2019) 	<p>“Journalism”, “Multimedia Communication”, “Communication and Media Studies”, “Public Relations and Strategic Management”</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Worlds of Journalism Studies (from 2019) 	<p>“Journalism”, “Multimedia Communication”, “Communication and Media Studies”, “Public Relations and Strategic Management”</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · European Commission, Gender and Media; country report (2018) 	<p>“Journalism”, “Photography”, “Multimedia Communication”, “Communication and Media Studies”, “Public Relations and Strategic Management”, “Health Communication”</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership project “Media and Information Literacy&Innovative Teaching Methods Laboratory”, project leader (2017-2020); partners: University of Tartu; Vilniaus Universitetas; Uniwersytet Wroclawsky; Goeteborgs Universitet; National Information Agency LETA SIA, National Library of Latvia · Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership Project “Media and Information Literacy & Innovative Teaching Methods Laboratory” (2017-2020) 	<p>“Journalism”, “Photography”, “Multimedia Communication”, “Communication and Media Studies”, “Public Relations and Strategic Management”</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Self-censorship and Professional Journalistic Ethics in the Former Eastern Block, University of Leeds, UK (2017-2019). Pašcenzūra un žurnālistu profesionālā ētika bijušā Austrumu bloka valstīs, Līdsas Universitāte, Lielbritānija (2017 – 2019) 	<p>“Journalism”, “Communication and Media Studies”, “Public Relations and Strategic Management”</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Diplomacy of Russia in Latvia: Mass media and nongovernmental sector, ed. A.Kudors. – Riga: Centre for East European Policy Studies (2014) 	“Journalism”, “Public Relations”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internet Aggressiveness Index (from 2011 until now) 	“Journalism”, “Photography”, “Multimedia Communication”, “Communication and Media Studies”, “Public Relations and Strategic Management”, “Communication Culture and Multimedia”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional values of Journalists in Baltic States. Individual project (2015-2016) Professional Values of Baltic Journalists (2015-2016) 	“Journalism”, “Photography”, “Multimedia Communication”, “Communication and Media Studies”, “Communication Culture and Multimedia”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nordplus, Network of “Serious Games” (2014-2015) Nordplus Project “Serious Games” (2014-2015) 	“Journalism”, “Multimedia Communication”, “Communication and Media Studies”, “Public Relations and Strategic Management”

Research development plan:

- 3-5 annual project applications involving partners from different countries;
- participation as partners in preparation of the current international projects (Horizon 2020, Erasmus+, *COST Action*, “Worlds of Journalism Studies”, Nordplus, etc.);
- involving postdoctoral researchers (currently two postdoctoral researchers: from Italy and Estonia);
- presentation of 2-3 doctoral theses in doctoral study programme “Communication Culture and Multimedia” by 2023;
- involvement of international researchers in university research projects, such as the Internet Aggressiveness Index project.

Annex No. 14 provides information on projects involving RSU.

4.4. Specify the way how the higher education institution/ college promotes the involvement of the teaching staff in scientific research and/or artistic creation. Provide the description and assessment of the activities carried out by the academic staff in the field of scientific research and/or artistic creation relevant to the study direction by providing examples and the summary of the quantitative data on the activities in the field of scientific research and/or artistic creation relevant to the study direction over the reporting period, for instance, the publications, participation in conferences, activities in

the field of artistic creation, participation in projects by the academic staff members, etc., by listing the aforementioned according to the relevance.

To achieve the scientific goals of RSU - to motivate the teaching staff to engage in research and to increase support for more active involvement of the teaching staff in research:

- a motivating remuneration system for involvement of staff, including the teaching staff, in research projects is being developed;
- academic staff will be paid a variable remuneration component (lump sum) once a year from 2019 to 2021, based on the following research results for the previous year: anonymous peer-reviewed scientific publication with RSU affiliation, presented doctoral theses supervised, registered patents with RSU ownership, total contract amount of the RSU-attracted project funds;
- organising networking activities for academic staff on topics related to research funding, intellectual property rights registration, responsible research and innovation, etc.;
- financial support is provided for publications in WoS/SCOPUS cited journals, especially open-access publications;
- studies focused on the research topic are ensured.

See Annex No. 6.4 "List of Scientific Publications by the Teaching Staff Related to the Study Programme for the Last Six Years".

The RSU Social Sciences Platform's research staff development strategy is focused on providing excellent research in social sciences and ensuring a sustainable and supportive research ecosystem for alumni and RSU resident academic and research staff.

The goal of the research staff development strategy is to identify areas of activity that can have a significant impact on the development and attraction of scientific talent, to analyze the conditions necessary for the intended activities to achieve the goals, and to make the necessary changes. These activities also serve as an instrument for the strategic and sustainable development of human resources, in line with the principles laid down in the European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

Systematic development of the scientific staff in 2013-2018 has led to the following results:

- New job opportunities for new doctoral alumni and support for early career growth of researchers;
- Five post-doctoral research support projects have been attracted;
- guest lecturers receive competitive remuneration, flexible working hours, travel and living costs (the Human Resources Department also uses "Euraxess" to select lecturers);
- groups of scientists which aim is to attract young, foreign or returning Latvian scientists, resulting in three new projects and additional scientific capacity;
- alumni involvement in several grants and projects is now mandatory.

The results of the strategic target of attracting more scientific talents to vacant positions during the reporting period 2013-2018:

- Succession plans for the academic staff have been prepared;
- training on research topics;
- The statistical laboratory provides analytical support and advice on research methodologies,

etc.;

- support and consultation on the development of the project applications and projects management;
- English proficiency testing and English language training;
- financial support for *Web of Science/Scopus, Open Access publications*.

Increasing strategic goal support for RSU staff research activity; results of the measures to reduce remuneration imbalances during the reporting period 2013-2018:

- significant increase in remuneration of the scientific staff and technical support staff for scientific staff;
- performance-based monthly bonus system, considering staff involvement in research projects;
- introduction of electronic time recording (work time tracking) applications;
- The results of the annual staff appraisal 2017 revealed that researchers' affiliation rate is still low - RSU solved this issue by implementing an internal grant and motivation system.

Strategic Target Award for Outstanding Research Staff Management from the activities of 2018 to promote RSU participation in the awarding:

- Increased administrative support for project implementation;
- the increasing remuneration of scientific staff;
- new positions for leading scientists (e.g., three leading scientists in social sciences);
- the annual performance-based award for members of the academic and research staff involved in scientific projects related to publications, registered patents, defended theses based on the funding amount (contract amount).

SSP promotes the modernization of the study environment and content by engaging academic staff in research projects, thereby improving their knowledge of modern technology and industry trends. The leading scientists of the Platform work closely with state organizations and politicians, enabling them to participate in policy development and prepare amendment proposals for laws and regulations, strengthening collaboration with industry players to promote innovation and commercialization. Research results and innovations are constantly integrated into the study process and study programmes.

Summary of scientific research activities of teaching staff involved in the implementation of the Study Direction during the reporting period is listed in Annex 6.5.

4.5. Specify how the involvement of the students in scientific research and/or artistic creation activities is promoted. Provide the assessment and description of the involvement of the students of all-level study programmes in the relevant study direction in scientific research and/or artistic creation activities by giving examples of the opportunities offered to and used by the students.

Students may get involved in scientific activities:

- by participating in scientific interest groups of students in various areas. Currently, 26 scientific interest groups have been formed and work actively (more information on the [website](#));
- by applying for receipt of financial aid from the Student Union for participation in conferences

or seminars in the country or abroad (each year, more than 10 students receive financial aid for participation in conferences);

- by applying at the student portal with a doctoral student of RSU to assist in the development of a scientific paper;
- by participating in RSU scientific conference;
- by participating with their own research in RSU International Student Conference (ISC). RSU ISC is an annual project hosted by SU that became international in 2015, and each year it attracts more and more students from various countries. In 2018, the conference reached new peaks, being organised for two days and involving more than 270 students with research works both in healthcare and social sciences. More information about the conference of this year and previous year can be found on the [website](#);
- students of all levels can apply for work in research projects; currently the students of the direction are involved in the following projects: Project “In Memoriam” of the Latvian Council of Science; project “RELATE”, VIP project by S.Kruks, K.Sedlenieks.

RSU departments and scientific interest groups of students are involved in organisation of the conference in order to create workshops; RSU professors are involved in assessment of the works, while the management and structural units are involved in various organisational issues.

Each year, a new team of organisers is created for this project; therefore, each year, the project manager faces a challenge to set a higher standard than the previous year, so the outcome depends on the vision and ambitions of the manager.

Each year, more works are submitted in health sciences, and it is difficult to involve students of social sciences in the conference. Experience shows that mostly it is related to motivation of medical students to collect points for residency. Students of the social sciences are more difficult to motivate; therefore, ideas are sought on added value obtained by a student who would receive an award, for example, adding a grade to the final paper or granting discounts for the tuition fee.

This year, there was particular success in advertising the conference both via the conference website and radio interviews, as well as distribution of tangible materials in RSU and buildings of other universities.

Challenge of the next year’s conference is to involve even more students with their research work both in the block of healthcare and social sciences in order to increase the number of sections and interested audience.

4.6. Provide a brief description and assessment of the forms of innovation (for instance, product, process, marketing, and organisational innovation) generally used in the study direction subject to the assessment, by giving the respective examples and assessing their impact on the study process.

Mapping

In 2017-2018, a new type of study programme mapping was performed at RSU, which is a part of the study programme management process and promotes the possibility to implement a student-centred approach. When mapping study programmes, analysis of programme content, mostly results of the programme, is carried out. Results of study programme mapping process – acquired maps and observations are intended both for the analysis of study programmes and assessment of quality, as well as the improvement of the study programme.

Mapping is performed by using MS Excel mapping tool developed by Study Programme Administration Unit of the Centre for Educational Growth of RSU, which extracts data from descriptions of study courses of the respective study programme in the RSU register of study courses. See mapping results in Annex No. 18.1.

In the framework of the ESF SO project “Improvement of Management Processes and Modernisation of Study Programme Content at Rīga Stradiņš University”, a mapping information system specification was developed in 2019, planning the system development in 2020. The planned mapping system will be integrated into the RSU IT systems and will ensure the mapping of the results of the study programmes and study courses and the monitoring of the coherence of the results.

BITF

In 2014, targeted scholarships of Boris and Inara Teterev Foundation (BITF) for RSU teaching staff were created: “Integration of International Experience”, “Content Upgrading of Study Programmes”, and “Increasing International Citation Index of the Teaching Staff”.

Activities of the targeted scholarship are implemented in two ways: for the new or experienced teaching staff individually or for the new teaching staff in cooperation with a mentor. Support financing is received both by the new teaching staff and the experienced teaching staff mentor, and in close cooperation they develop materials necessary for the study course. Both participants of the activity are equally responsible for both the process and quality of the work result.

The RSU Development Strategy 2017-2021 defined the RSU IT infrastructure development concept, which supports the improvement of existing information systems and development of new e-solutions in order to improve the quality of studies and promote administrative efficacy.

RSU students and university lecturers already have a well-developed IT infrastructure and virtual study environment, however, the existing IT systems need to be improved and new e-solutions should be developed to ensure closer integration of systems, development of new e-services and a more friendly interface for students and lecturers.

Since February this year, students have access to a new and upgraded portal and mobile application MyRSU, which is flexible for conversion and development, taking student interests into account. Mobile applications and portal versions are designed to make the student's everyday life easier by offering the existing functionality, adding new services such as a map with all RSU training facilities, online e-service availability (application and statement requests, e-mail personalisation, e-ticket extension, scholarship applications). For more information, see Section I Paragraph 3.3.

In order to increase the quality of studies by using advanced technologies and e-solutions, RSU has set the following tasks:

- 1) to develop the mapping system of study programmes that will ensure the possibility to see the meaning of the particular study course in the study programme, and how the student can acquire knowledge, skills, and competences required for the particular profession by completing certain study courses. E-solution of study programme mapping will strengthen the shared use of resources, promote development of joint study programmes, and decrease duplication of the content of study programmes.

2) to supplement the existing RSU Register of Study Programmes for a more efficient management of study programmes that will ensure definition of results of study programmes and the joint plan, preparation of accreditation reports, analysis and benchmark comparison of performance indicators of the study programmes;

3) to supplement the existing RSU Register of Study Courses in order to ensure vertical integration of the content of study courses that will provide a possibility to link topics of study courses within the framework of the study programme in support of succession of study courses. A dictionary of keywords of study courses and visualisation of keywords will be developed that will reflect the related topics of the study courses and courses;

4) to establish a link between the thematic planning of the course description and the corresponding e-studies environment course, where the lecturer would be allowed to choose whether to create the respective e-course with the same thematic division as indicated in the study course description;

5) to use the RSU library of audiovisual study materials, including descriptions of various study objects, for example, clinical cases, dissection cases, simulation scenarios, interactive training videos, etc., ensuring systematisation and collection of study objects, as well as the possibility to share study objects with other higher education institutions; and for the students to be able to find the necessary simulation cases, clinical cases, and other study objects easily.

6) to develop a new system that would make it much easier for students to register for elective study courses available to them at times they are comfortable with. Establishing a system would facilitate the work of the administrative staff, allowing students to be added to elective courses more easily and quickly;

7) to improve the Electronic Admission System by reducing the administrative load, automating manual actions, improving the user interface, supplementing functionality, etc.

In order to ensure an advanced internal information exchange system for solving administrative issues, speeding up the circulation of information and decision-making, as well as to ensure electronic circulation of documents within RSU, the following tasks for increasing administrative efficiency are set by RSU:

1) migration to electronic storage of the student file – in accordance with Cabinet Regulation No. 203, applications, requests of the students and orders on the movement of students and study process may be stored only electronically. It will decrease the processing time of documents, increase the efficiency of administrative work and data quality, decrease the use of natural resources;

2) acquisition of additional HOP modules to provide availability of new e-services: enhancement of HOP functionality by implementing new e-services for the staff, for example, record keeping of business trips, e-instructions, etc.

3) Work Execution Management (WEM) system change – RSU has a WEM that ensures management of the assessment of achievement of aims and management of work performance. Change of the WEM portal is necessary in order to improve usability and aid in the work of heads of the structural units, ensure integration with other RSU information systems;

4) acquisition of invoice digitalisation tool – in accordance with the EU directive, pursuant to which all invoices between companies and state authorities must be in electronic format as of 27 November 2018, a possibility to digitalise printed invoices and create meta-invoices from these must be ensured.

5) to develop a quality and process management system – RSU Quality Assurance and Internal Audit Department already uses process management tool QPR Enterprise Architect with success. In May 2019, an agreement was signed, under which additional licenses were acquired to use the process modelling tool in a more comprehensive manner and to access the latest version of QPR. Employees will have access to the QPR web portal, which will allow each RSU employee to view the processes created, customize the content of the site to their own needs, and keep track of changes made and monitor the activities under their responsibility.

When evaluating innovative solutions implemented in order to support the study process, it can be said that it is a continuous process of growth guided by the RSU management and respective structural units.

II - Description of the Study Direction (5. Cooperation and Internationalisation)

5.1. Provide the assessment as to how the cooperation with different institutions from Latvia and abroad (higher education institutions/ colleges, employers, employers' organisations, municipalities, non-governmental organisations, scientific institutes, etc.) within the study direction contributes to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study direction. Specify the criteria by which the cooperation partners suitable for the study direction and the relevant study programmes are selected and how the cooperation is organised by describing the cooperation with employers. In addition, specify the mechanism for the attraction of the employers.

RSU International Department (ID) has established an extensive network of partnering higher education institutions in Europe. Partnering higher education institutions are informed on Erasmus exchange possibilities at RSU, including the field of exchange of visiting teaching staff, on a regular basis. In addition to electronic communication, RSU ID every year organises Erasmus+ International Week, the programme of which includes several professional networking events. Within the framework of this even, contacts are established with new Erasmus+ cooperation partners.

Criteria for cooperation with the institutions of higher education, NGOs and employers and forms of cooperation:

- operation of the institution, company or NGO in the field of communication and research in the information and communication science, media studies (Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences, the University of Latvia, Turība University, Latvian Association of Journalists, Baltic Centre for Media Excellence;
- Participation in the creation of content of study programmes (Latvian Television, Latvian Radio, Satori.lv, arterritory.com Delfi, Tvnet, a.o.);
- Opportunity to cooperate in the development of research projects (Artificial Intelligence Laboratory of the UL, Tallinn University, University of Tartu, University of Akureyri, Vilnius University, University of Warsaw, SKDS, etc.);
- Provision of expertise and implementation of applied research (Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia, Human Rights and Public Affairs Committee of the Saeima, European Commission, State Chancellery, etc.);
- Cooperation in providing places for student placements and volunteer projects.

The organisation of cooperation and attraction of employers have been organised in the following way:

- Employers are invited to conduct study courses and guest lectures, seminars on a regular basis;
- at least 35% of course lecturers represent employers;
- employers are also graduates involved in creating the content of the study direction;
- study courses partially take place at the employers – media, institutions, etc.
- the list of placement providers has been renewed and updated on a regular basis by the heads of the study programmes who react to placement offers and search for placement providers themselves;
- Student meetings with placement providers (such as Leta) have been organised;
- Information about placement opportunities and vacancies offered by employers has been sent to the students and posted on RSU's social media sites.

In addition to these events organised by RSU, representatives of RSU ID regularly attend annual events of professional international associations with a purpose to ensure exchanges, including visiting teaching. For example, RSU participates in networking exhibitions organised by the European Association of Erasmus Coordinators and European Association for International Education.

RSU ID supports Erasmus visiting teaching visits both before the visiting teaching staff arrives in Riga and during the period of their visiting teaching (for example, administers documentation of the visiting teaching, develops the plan of activities, assists in the process of the visit, etc.).

Current development of cooperation and internationalisation is in line with the objectives of the directions and the development plan and is generally considered sufficient.

Cooperation agreements with other institutions have been signed in order to implement the study programmes, see Annex 7. See Annex 8.1 for statistical data on mobility of incoming and outgoing students.

Cooperation with the employers takes place continuously and on several levels. In order to promote cooperation with employers' organizations, their involvement in the education of future specialists, as well as to increase the RSU students' competitiveness in the labour market, the annual Career Opportunity Week is being held at the University. During this week, employers' organisations give presentations where employer representatives tell about the career opportunities in the respective organisation, offer RSU students and alumni the current vacancies, as well as give practical advice on how to succeed in the job market. In 2015, more than 30 employers participated in the RSU Career Opportunity Week taking place on October 27-29.

At least 50 % of employers par Commissions of State Examination, defence of Master's, Bachelor's theses: it is stipulated by Cabinet Regulations No. 481, and compliance with these regulations is strictly controlled at RSU.

RSU implements Erasmus+ programme mobility activity among the countries participating in the programme. In total, more than 200 bilateral cooperation agreements have been signed, providing mobility of the students and staff in all cycles of studies: during Bachelor's, Master's, and doctoral studies. Partnering universities are selected on the basis of available information on equal study programmes and conditions of training language. One of the main conditions is alignment of the study courses during the student exchange programme in order to be able to recognise study sources and add them to the diploma supplement of the respective RSU study programme. Thus, a complete study process is ensured, supplemented by experience gained abroad. RSU implements Erasmus+ programme mobility activity among the countries participating in the programme. In

total, more than 150 bilateral cooperation agreements have been signed, providing mobility of the students and staff in all cycles of studies: during Bachelor's, Master's, and doctoral studies. Partnering universities are selected on the basis of available information on equal study programmes and conditions of training language. One of the main conditions is alignment of the study subjects during the student exchange programme in order to be able to recognise study subjects and add to the diploma supplement of the respective RSU study programme. Thus, a complete study process is ensured, supplemented by experience gained abroad.

In the international environment, RSU has been assessed positively. International university rating QS World University Rankings 2019 has included RSU among 1,000 best higher education institutions of the world, especially appreciating the university's ability to attract international students. RSU also regularly receives the highest evaluation "A" in various categories of the U-Multirank rating of higher education institutions of the European Union.

University has also received other international recognition. For example, as mentioned above, it was recognised as a student-centred higher education institution in the PASCL evaluation by the European Student Association. The World Bank experts in their research of 2016 also positively evaluated involvement of students in RSU decision-making, presence of international students, and strategic planning at the university.

The broad Erasmus network of partnering higher education institutions is a proof of international recognition of RSU. Currently, 200 Erasmus cooperation agreements have been signed in Europe and beyond in various study disciplines. In 2017, RSU also received recognition from the State Education Development Agency on successful implementation of Erasmus programme of the European Commission.

See Annex No. 7 for information on cooperation agreements signed with other institutions.

See Annex No. 12 References of employers and industry experts about study programmes related to the study direction.

5.2. Specify the system or mechanisms, which are used to attract the students and the teaching staff from abroad and provide a description of the dynamics of the number of the attracted students and the teaching staff.

There are currently no international students in these study directions. Within the framework of the study directions, student mobility is implemented through the European Commission Erasmus+ programme. Incoming students are admitted to study programmes of the study directions in the status of students during the exchange period. Students are provided with the necessary volume of study courses and number of credit points. The offered courses are held in English.

Over the last six years, there have been 76 incoming students, 37 outgoing students, and 29 foreign lecturers in the study direction of Information and Communication Science.

Annexes No. 8.1 and 8.2 provide statistics on international students and lecturers during the reference period, statistics on outgoing and incoming student mobility during the reference period by study programme.

5.3. In the event that the study programme entails a traineeship, provide a description of

the traineeship options offered to the students, as well as the provision, and work organisation. Specify whether the higher education institution/ college provides assistance in finding traineeships.

Although there are academic study programmes represented in the study direction, taking into consideration the content of the study programmes, the amount of skills required for communication specialists, the suggestions of students and lecturers, the Bachelor's study programmes provide for placement in the second study year (two placement periods, each for 4 CP or 6 ECTS).

Placements are organised as follows:

- they are included in the content plan of the study programme and academic year;
- guidelines for them (including placement goals, tasks, requirements for each study programme), placement agreement, placement report documents (placement diary, placement assessment from the placement provider, student placement self-assessment) are developed;
- heads of study programmes establish cooperation with placement providers;
- heads of study programmes consult and prepare students for placement, recommending placement locations appropriate for the content of studies so that these would correspond with the goals of the study programme;
- if necessary, the head of study programme aids in finding a placement and agrees with the provider of placement on goals and tasks of placement as well as other conditions;
- heads of study programmes assess the results of each student's placement;
- placement assessment is included in the student's progress sheet and diploma supplement.

Study direction has experience with placement in another country, specifically in the Great Britain. If a student wishes to have a placement in another country or work at a company which offers a placement in English, the procedure is the same as for placements in Latvian. For example, the students of the direction may have a placement with the English editorial section of the social media portal lsm.lv.

See Annex No. 9.1 with a description of the students' placement organisation.

See Annex No. 9.2 with information on contracts and other confirmations about the provision of student placements to students.

5.4. In the event that joint study programmes are implemented in the study direction, provide the justification of the creation of the joint study programmes and a description and assessment of the selection of the partnering higher education institutions by including information on the principles and the procedures for the creation and implementation of these joint study programmes. In the event that no joint study programmes are implemented in the study direction, provide a description and assessment of the plans of the higher education institution/ college for the creation of such study programmes within the study direction.

So far, no joint study programmes have been implemented within the Study Direction, but a new

international joint Master's study programme "Media and Information Literacy" is currently being developed.

II - Description of the Study Direction (6. Implementation of the Recommendations Received During the Previous Assessment Procedures)

6.1. Assessment of the fulfilment of the plan regarding the implementation of the recommendations provided by the experts during the previous accreditation of the study direction, as well as the assessment of the impact of the given recommendations on the study quality or the improvement of the study process within the study direction and the relevant study programmes.

See Annex 11 "Review of the implementation of recommendations".

Recommendations provided during the previous assessment of the study direction have been fully implemented; analysis of recommendations has been conducted to apply the recommendations to the specification of the study direction and relevant study programmes.

Effect of the implemented recommendations on the quality of studies is as follows:

- In specified study programmes content fragmentation has been eliminated, linking together various study course goals and results to create a uniform, mutually complementing set of knowledge, skills and competences;
- By educating lecturers and restructuring the management of the direction, a student-centred approach to implementation of the study programmes of the direction has been formed and established;
- Increased ratio of research in the study process, including research data in the study content, improving the courses on research methods in social sciences (for example, the course "Qualitative Research Methods" has been created and approbated), as well as involving students in research;
- By attracting the financing of supporters and funds of the Faculty of Communication, ratio of media technologies available to the students has been increased providing the possibility to work at the assembly classroom, multimedia studio and photo studio;
- Student medium has been created which works in radio, TV and web platforms, providing the opportunity to put into practice the knowledge received during the study courses (creation of media content, work of an operator, assembly, content communication, image creation, speech art, animation, creation of podcasts, editing, website content administration, etc.). For example, in the study course "Radio Journalism" students create audio interviews as a course tasks, and the best are published in multimedia format on the Student medium skalak.rsu.lv.;
- Improved link with the employers, increasing the number of placement providers and involvement in study programmes (visiting lectures, master workshops, invitation to be active in RSU advisor convention).

6.2. Implementation of the recommendations given by the experts during the evaluation of the changes to the relevant study programmes in the respective study direction or

licensed study programmes over the reporting period or recommendations received during the procedure for the inclusion of the study programme in the accreditation form of the study direction (if applicable).

See Annex 11 “Report on the Implementation of Recommendations”.

Annexes

I. Information on the Higher Education Institution/ College		
List of the governing regulatory enactments and regulations of the higher education institution/ college	Kopa_Normativie_ENG_2020_marts.pdf	Kopa_Normativie_LV_2020_marts.pdf
Information on the implementation of the study direction in the branches of the higher education institution/ college (if applicable)	2_pielik_LiepFil_resursi_eng.pdf	2_pielik_LiepFil_resursi_lv.pdf
Management structure of the higher education institution/ college	3_pielik_RSU_org_chart_19112019_eng.pdf	3_pielik_RSU_strukturshema_19112019_lv.pdf
II. Description of the Study Direction - 1. Management of the Study Direction		
Plan for the development of the study direction (if applicable)	4.1_pielik_StV_attistibas_plans_eng.pdf	4.1_pielik_IKZ_attistibas_plans_lv.pdf
Management structure of the study direction	4.2_pielik_StV_parvald_shema_eng.pdf	4.2_StV_parvaldibas_shema_lv.pdf
II. Description of the Study Direction - 3. Resources and Provision of the Study Direction		
Basic information on the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study direction	6.1._pielik_Docetaju_Saraksts_IKZ_PD_dati_eng.xlsx	6-1_pielik_Docetaju_Saraksts_IKZ_PD_dati_StK_LV.xlsx
Biographies of the teaching staff members (in Europass Curriculum Vitae format)	6.2._pielik_CV_ENG_preciz_25032020.pdf	6.2._pielik_CV_LV_preciz_25032020.pdf
Summary of the statistical data on the incoming and outgoing mobility of the teaching staff over the reporting period	6.3._pielik_Docetaju_mobilitate_iz_jen_eng.pdf	6.3._pielik_Docetaju_mobilitate_iz_jen_lv.pdf
II. Description of the Study Direction - 4. Scientific Research and Artistic Creation		
List of the publications, patents, and artistic creations of the teaching staff over the reporting period	6.4_pielik_doc_publicacijas_eng.pdf	6.4_pielik_doc_publicacijas.pdf
II. Description of the Study Direction - 5. Cooperation and Internationalisation		
List of cooperation agreements	7_pielik_Erasmus_sad_lig_ENG_precizets.pdf	7_pielik_Erasmus_sad_lig_lv_precizets.pdf
Statistical data on the teaching staff and the students from abroad	8.1_8.2_Studejoso_mobilitate_eng_papildinats.pdf	8.1_8.2_Studejoso_mobilitate_lv_precizets.pdf
Statistical data on the mobility of students (by specifying the study programmes)	8.1_8.2_Studejoso_mobilitate_eng.pdf	8.1_8.2_Studejoso_mobilitate_lv.pdf
Description of the organisation of the traineeship of the students	9.1._pielik_Prakse_eng.pdf	9.1._pielik_Prakse_lv.pdf
Information on the agreements and other documents confirming the traineeship of the students in companies	9.2._pielik_Prakses_ligums_eng.pdf	9.2._pielik_Prakses_ligums_lv.pdf
II. Description of the Study Direction - 6. Implementation of the Recommendations Received During the Previous Assessment Procedures		
Overview of the implementation of the provided recommendations	11_pielik_Eksp_rek_izpilde_eng.pdf	11_pielik_Eksp_Rekomend_izpilde_lv.pdf
Description of the Study Programme - Other mandatory attachments		
Confirmation signed by the rector, director or the head of the study programme or the study direction of the higher education institution/ college which states that the official language proficiency of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the relevant study programmes of the study direction complies with the regulations on the level of the official language knowledge and the procedures for testing official language proficiency for performing professional duties and office duties.	24.4_pielik_Apliecin_latv_valodas_StV_IKZ_parakstits_eng.pdf	24.4_pielik_Apliecin_latv_valodas_StV_IKZ_parakstits.pdf
III. Description of the Study Programme - 1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme		
Compliance of the joint study programme with the provisions of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (table)		
Statistics on the students over the reporting period		
III. Description of the Study Programme - 2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof		
Compliance of the study programme with the State Education Standard		
Compliance of the qualification to be acquired upon completion of the study programme with the professional standard (if applicable)		
Compliance of the study programme with the specific regulatory framework applicable to the relevant field (if applicable)		
Mapping of the study courses/ modules for the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study programme		
Curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme)		
Descriptions of the study courses/ modules		19_pielik_SA_planojums_LV.pdf
Description of the Study Direction - Other mandatory attachments		
Sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme.		
Description of the Study Programme - Other mandatory attachments		
Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college will provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme or at another higher education institution/ college (a contract with another accredited higher education institution/ college), in case the implementation of the study programme is discontinued		

Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college guarantees to the students a compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the higher education institution/ college (actions or failure to act) and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme		
Confirmation of the higher education institution/ college that the teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language according to European language levels (see the levels under www.europass.lv), if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language.		
If the study programmes in the study direction subject to the assessment are doctoral study programmes, a confirmation that at least five teaching staff members with doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field or sub-field of science, in which the study programme has intended to award a scientific degree.		
If academic study programmes are implemented within the study direction, a document confirming that the academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the provisions set out in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause three of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education		
Sample (or samples) of the study agreement		
If academic study programmes for less than 250 full-time students are implemented within the study direction, the opinion of the Council for Higher Education shall be attached in compliance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.		
Description of the Study Direction - Other mandatory attachments		
Electronically signed application form for assessment of a study direction	IESNIEGUMS_IKZ_AKREDITACIJA_25-03-2020_ENG.pdf	IESNIEGUMS_IKZ_AKREDITACIJA_25-03-2020.pdf

Other annexes

Name of document	Document
4.1_pielik_IKZ_attistibas_plans_lv.pdf	4.1_pielik_IKZ_attistibas_plans_lv.pdf
4.2_StV_parvaldibas_shema_lv.pdf	4.2_StV_parvaldibas_shema_lv.pdf
4.2_pielik_StV_parvald_shema_eng.pdf	4.2_pielik_StV_parvald_shema_eng.pdf
14_pielik_RSU_istenotie_projekti_lv.pdf	14_pielik_RSU_istenotie_projekti_lv.pdf
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5.2_pielik_Stud_pasparvalde_lv.pdf	5.2_pielik_Stud_pasparvalde_lv.pdf
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25_pielik_Senata_izraksts_IKZ_LV.pdf	25_pielik_Senata_izraksts_IKZ_LV.pdf
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12_pielik_atsauksmes_lv.pdf	12_pielik_atsauksmes_lv.pdf
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7_9.2_Pielik_Sad_Ligumi_prakses_lv.pdf	7_9.2_Pielik_Sad_Ligumi_prakses_lv.pdf
7_9.2_Pielik_Sad_Ligumi_prakses_lv_eng.pdf	7_9.2_Pielik_Sad_Ligumi_prakses_lv_eng.pdf
13_pielik_RSU_apbalv_market_KD_ENG.pdf	13_pielik_RSU_apbalv_market_KD_ENG.pdf
10_pielik_VID_Absolventi_2015_2016_lv.pdf	10_pielik_VID_Absolventi_2015_2016_lv.pdf
10_pielik_VID_Absolv_2015_2016_eng.pdf	10_pielik_VID_Absolv_2015_2016_eng.pdf
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22.1_Bakalaura_darbu_temas_2015-2019-.pdf	22.1_Bakalaura_darbu_temas_2015-2019-.pdf
22.2_pielik_Magistra_darbu_temas_2015-2019_lv.pdf	22.2_pielik_Magistra_darbu_temas_2015-2019_lv.pdf
22.1_Bakalaura_darbu_temas_2015-2019_eng.pdf	22.1_Bakalaura_darbu_temas_2015-2019_eng.pdf
22.2_pielik_Magistra_darbu_temas_2015-2019_eng.pdf	22.2_pielik_Magistra_darbu_temas_2015-2019_eng.pdf
6-5_pielik_Docet_publicac_kopsavilkums_ENG.xlsx	6-5_pielik_Docet_publicac_kopsavilkums_ENG.xlsx
6-5_pielik_Docet_publicac_kopsavilkums_LV.xlsx	6-5_pielik_Docet_publicac_kopsavilkums_LV.xlsx

Health Communication

Title of the higher education institution	<i>Information and Communication Sciences</i>
ProcedureStudyProgram.Name	<i>Health Communication</i>
Education classification code	<i>45321</i>
Type of the study programme	<i>Academic master study programme</i>
Name of the study programme director	<i>Vita</i>
Surname of the study programme director	<i>Savicka</i>
E-mail of the study programme director	<i>vita.savicka@rsu.lv</i>
Title of the study programme director	<i>Mg. soc.</i>
Phone of the study programme director	
Goal of the study programme	<i>To prepare Masters of social sciences in communication science who have theoretical knowledge and professional skills in mass communication, health sociology, communication ethics and psychology, in health and social marketing, and other disciplines.</i>
Tasks of the study programme	<p><i>To create and manage the studies so that students would acquire:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1) theoretical knowledge on media systems and basic principles thereof, on mass communication and media effects that are necessary for successfully understanding society's information dissemination and perception processes and to explain them in context with matters significant to the public health;</i> <i>2) theoretical knowledge in different communication science subjects and communication research methods that are necessary for understanding patterns of health communication and for managing these processes;</i> <i>3) theory and practice of health and social marketing;</i> <i>4) health communication and health journalism approaches;</i> <i>5) health communication ethics and law;</i> <i>6) and use theoretical basis in communication science for conducting research;</i> <i>7) skills for using modern communication technologies in health communication;</i> <i>8) knowledge in health issues of modern society to be able to orientate themselves in the diversity of issues to be tackled in public health and in the inquiry methods used;</i> <i>9) knowledge necessary for the promotion of health and understanding the most important theoretical and practical issues of disease prevention;</i> <i>10) knowledge of basic issues of epidemiology and biostatistics that is necessary for understanding and interpreting health research and other health-related information;</i> <i>11) knowledge necessary for understanding and analysing organisational and economic aspects and patterns of health care;</i> <i>12) clinical knowledge base necessary for making the right decision in educating society on health matters.</i>

Results of the study programme	<p>1) Knowledge on constituent and decisive factors of individual's and society's health and diversity thereof; on health assessment methods and information acquisition sources of an individual and society; on the most important health issues at a national, European, and global level.</p> <p>2) Understanding of health promotion and disease prevention strategies, principles, and elements. Knowledge on health care organisational and financing principles by identifying, classifying, and describing different models and health care system levels.</p> <p>3) Knowledge on the history of communication theory and its modern trends, media effects, media platforms, specialised media and their role, information society.</p> <p>4) Understanding of social research methods in health communication, creation of media content in project management.</p> <p>5) In-depth knowledge and understanding of health communication, communication psychology, aspects of interpersonal communication, approaches to health and social marketing, the essence of crisis communication and its underlying principles.</p> <p>6) Processing of the acquired data on health statistics by calculating and interpreting different health event occurrence and association indicators.</p> <p>7) Critical analysis and evaluation of health education, health promotion, and disease prevention events, the ability to discuss in a reasoned manner on the use of health promotion elements in the creation and implementation of health policy and programmes.</p> <p>8) Acquisition, critical selection, and use of information for the analysis of health communication issues, presentation and use of acquired results and offered solutions in the implementation of health communication goals.</p> <p>9) Creation of content of health communication message, planning and implementation of campaigns by using public relation and marketing tools, campaign monitoring and assessment.</p> <p>10) Management of health strategic communication processes in accordance with communication goals, format needs of the audience and media by using modern communication technologies in health communication processes.</p> <p>11) To conduct and manage predictable and unpredictable research and practice processes and projects in communication and mass media environment by using new, strategic approaches that encompass interaction between analytical content of technologies and communication, observing ethical attitude in practice and by assuming responsibility for one's decisions and conduct.</p> <p>12) To critically react to events and processes in society based on scientific principles. To assess media content by analysing it in accordance with professional criteria and knowledge of health communication and by respectively justifying approaches and conclusions.</p> <p>13) To raise societal awareness of health promotion and preventive health service notion and meaning in the context of contemporary societal health issues, as well as of their role in health improvement of an individual and the society.</p>
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Final examination upon the completion of the study programme	<i>Master's thesis.</i>
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Study programme forms

Full time studies - 2 years - latvian

Study type and form	<i>Full time studies</i>
Duration in full years	2
Duration in month	0
Language	<i>latvian</i>
Amount (CP)	80
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Prior education necessary for the admission to the study programme: Second level professional higher education in medicine, dentistry, and pharmacy or Bachelor's degree in health care, natural sciences, environmental sciences, food science, social sciences, and humanities. Additional admission requirements: essay on a topic defined by the committee that is related to health or healthy lifestyle. Applicants are enrolled based on the outcomes of the competition formed by essay assessment and the weighted average grade in diploma. In case of an equal sum of assessment, the competition is affected by the existence of scientific publications (publications in an internationally quotable journal – 2 points, in a national level scientific or popular science journal – 1 point).</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Master of Social Sciences in Information and Communication Science</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Rīga Stradiņš University	RĪGA	DZIRCIEMA IELA 16, KURZEMES RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1007
Liepāja branch of Rīga Stradiņš University	LIEPĀJA	RIŅĶU IELA 24/26, LIEPĀJA, LV-3405

Full time studies - 2 years - english

Study type and form	<i>Full time studies</i>
Duration in full years	2
Duration in month	0
Language	<i>english</i>
Amount (CP)	80

Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Prior education necessary for the admission to the study programme: Second level professional higher education in medicine, dentistry, and pharmacy or Bachelor's degree in health care, natural sciences, environmental sciences, food science, social sciences, and humanities. Additional admission requirements: essay on a topic defined by the committee that is related to health or healthy lifestyle. Applicants are enrolled based on the outcomes of the competition formed by essay assessment and the weighted average grade in diploma. In case of an equal sum of assessment, the competition is affected by the existence of scientific publications (publications in an internationally quotable journal – 2 points, in a national level scientific or popular science journal – 1 point).</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Master of Social Sciences in Information and Communication Science</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Rīga Stradiņš University	RĪGA	DZIRCIEMA IELA 16, KURZEMES RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1007
Liepāja branch of Rīga Stradiņš University	LIEPĀJA	RIŅĶU IELA 24/26, LIEPĀJA, LV-3405

Part time studies - 2 years, 6 months - latvian

Study type and form	<i>Part time studies</i>
Duration in full years	<i>2</i>
Duration in month	<i>6</i>
Language	<i>latvian</i>
Amount (CP)	<i>80</i>
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Prior education necessary for the admission to the study programme: Second level professional higher education in medicine, dentistry, and pharmacy or Bachelor's degree in health care, natural sciences, environmental sciences, food science, social sciences, and humanities. Additional admission requirements: essay on a topic defined by the committee that is related to health or healthy lifestyle. Applicants are enrolled based on the outcomes of the competition formed by essay assessment and the weighted average grade in diploma. In case of an equal sum of assessment, the competition is affected by the existence of scientific publications (publications in an internationally quotable journal – 2 points, in a national level scientific or popular science journal – 1 point).</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Master of Social Sciences in Information and Communication Science</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
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Rīga Stradiņš University	RĪGA	DZIRCIEMA IELA 16, KURZEMES RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1007
Liepāja branch of Rīga Stradiņš University	LIEPĀJA	RIŅĶU IELA 24/26, LIEPĀJA, LV-3405

Part time studies - 2 years, 6 months - english

Study type and form	<i>Part time studies</i>
Duration in full years	2
Duration in month	6
Language	<i>english</i>
Amount (CP)	80
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Prior education necessary for the admission to the study programme: Second level professional higher education in medicine, dentistry, and pharmacy or Bachelor's degree in health care, natural sciences, environmental sciences, food science, social sciences, and humanities. Additional admission requirements: essay on a topic defined by the committee that is related to health or healthy lifestyle. Applicants are enrolled based on the outcomes of the competition formed by essay assessment and the weighted average grade in diploma. In case of an equal sum of assessment, the competition is affected by the existence of scientific publications (publications in an internationally quotable journal - 2 points, in a national level scientific or popular science journal - 1 point).</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Master of Social Sciences in Information and Communication Science</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Rīga Stradiņš University	RĪGA	DZIRCIEMA IELA 16, KURZEMES RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1007
Liepāja branch of Rīga Stradiņš University	LIEPĀJA	RIŅĶU IELA 24/26, LIEPĀJA, LV-3405

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme)

1.1. Description and analysis of changes in study programme parameters that have taken place since the issue of the previous accreditation certificate of study direction or the license of study programme if study programme is not included in the accreditation page of the study direction

Nr.	Parameter	Analysis of changes
1.	Study direction	—
2.	Name of the study programme	—
3.	Code of the study programme in accordance with the Latvian Education Classification	—
4.	Director of the study programme	Aija Bukova-Žideļūna replaces Anda Ķīvīte-Urtāne for the period of absence.
5.	Scientific degree of the head of the study programme	Aija Bukova-Žideļūna is an acting lecturer, Master in health care
6.	Aim of the study programme	—
7.	Objectives of the study programme	—
8.	Learning outcomes to be achieved	—
9.	Final examination upon the completion of the study programme	—
10.	Form and type of the study programme	—
11.	Duration of the study programme	—

Nr.	Parameter	Analysis of changes
12.	Language in which the study programme is implemented	—
13.	Amount of the study programme (CP, preferably also ECTS)	—
14.	Admission requirements	—
15.	The degree, to be awarded	
16.	The professional qualification to be awarded	—
17.	Place of implementation	So far, the study programme has only been implemented in Riga, but in accordance with the plan for the development of the study direction (see page Annex 4.1) it is planned to establish a working group to evaluate the possibilities for implementation of study programmes and to model their implementation plan at RSU Liepāja branch. The material and technical facilities of the branch and RSU as a whole are adequate for its implementation.

1.2. Analysis and assessment of the statistical data on the students of the respective study programme, the dynamics of the number of the students, and the factors affecting the changes to the number of the students. The analysis shall be broken down in the different study forms, types, and languages.

Annex 16 contains statistical data on students in the reporting period.

The study programme is implemented as part-time regular studies programme. In the 2019 winter admission, nine students were admitted and undertook their studies. Conversations with these students have indicated that the majority of students combine their studies with work. Work related to the field of health care is often the main factor that has motivated to look for additional in-depth opportunities for improving and understanding education and competences in this Master's study programme. Opportunities offered by the content of the study programme are highly evaluated by the students; moreover, the planned model for study work offered has been created thoughtfully in

order to comply with the students' needs and to ensure full-time study possibilities without ceasing professional activity.

The study programme is regularly popularised by using vast and diverse information channels. In addition to official means of communication of RSU, the programme has been popularised in major newspapers; for example, in the newspaper "Dienas Bizness" issue of 18 June 2018, as well as in social media portals; for example, [NRA](#), [LSM](#). There is a [video](#) that has been created and uploaded on *Youtube* channel on which different social networks of RSU contain explicit references.

Heads of the study programme and course lecturers participated in the conversation festival "[Lampa](#)" on 29 June 2019 where they encouraged enrolling in the study programme by talking about communication topicalities related to the health sector. Likewise, interviews to national mass media (in programmes of Latvijas Radio "Zināmais nezināmajā", "Labrīt", of LNT, etc.) are given in the first year of studies, the study programme is popularised with the head of the study programme participating in different public discussions; for example, in the [health hackathon](#) and [Researchers' breakfast](#) organised by the Ministry of Health.

1.3. Analysis and assessment of the interrelation between the name of the study programme, the degree or professional qualification to be acquired or the degree and professional qualification to be acquired, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and the admission requirements.

The name of the study programme clearly indicates the interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinary which are the basis of health communication, at the same time mentioning the rapidly evolving communication discipline within the communication science.

Nowadays, all kind of communication becomes more personal and requires more in-depth knowledge of a particular field. The field of public relations develops around the world, and its specialists are increasingly specialising in a particular field: finances, IT, health, etc. Tools for communication with different groups of society are rapidly changing, which makes it necessary to thoroughly increase theoretical knowledge base in health communication as well in order to be able to not only follow the requirements of modern technologies but also to use these tools in order to achieve communication goals.

Health communication becomes increasingly important in the field of health care system and public health. Health has become one of the matters on the public agenda. It is being discussed both in the mass media and with particular target audiences. Different opinions often emerge in discussions and in publicly available information, which are based on myths, instead of knowledge on conceptual matters and medical aspects of public health. It is one of several pieces of evidence regarding how important specific knowledge of communicators is in the field of health and the ability to create adequate content and a reasoned discussion. Health communication will become even more topical in future, since public interest in one's health increases, the number of adherents of a healthy lifestyle and the significance of health literacy in health protection and promotion increase, science attesting to the importance of person's compliance in the treatment process develops, and medicine and pharmacy, which are important economic fields, develop as well. Nowadays, it is increasingly important to create meaningful communication on different levels and which is based on scientific principles – in government relations, in communication of patients, non-

governmental organisations and their associates, in mass media communication with the society, in a dialogue of medical institutions with the society, national regulatory authorities, cooperation partners, and patients as well. Health communication is important also owing to the fact that it combines health psychology, sociology and communication sciences in order to explain models of human conduct that are very important in ensuring changes in human conduct.

Likewise, developments in the fields of medicine and pharmacy, communication requirements, obligations, and rights stipulated in the legislation demand new type of professionals who are able to communicate in accordance with legislative provisions, public needs, at the same time being able to achieve communication goals defined by organisations.

After successfully mastering the study programme, students are awarded a Master's degree of social sciences in communication and information sciences. The degree to be obtained indicates professional qualification competences and field where they can be applied. The study programme will allow to prepare and improve knowledge of specialists for professional labour market and academic environment both on a local and international level that will ensure the quality of both scientific activity and of the study process.

The study programme is unique, since it is the only study programme of such kind in the Baltics whose content encompasses understanding of communication and public health processes, knowledge, and competences at the same time. It is difficult to find an equivalent to the RSU Master's study programme "Health Communication" in Europe. Programmes at European institutions of higher education are either indirectly related to health communication, are implemented only in the official language or in the form of distance studies. The RSU study programme is implemented in small groups of students (one groups consists of 7-12 students), thus giving students the opportunity to ask lecturers questions that are of interest them, to receive individual answers, as well as to cover the curriculum in an interactive manner.

In order to guarantee the learning outcomes and to achieve the aims, admission requirements of the study programme provide that applicants, who have obtained second level professional higher education in medicine, dentistry, or pharmacy or Bachelor's degree in health care, natural sciences, environmental sciences, food science, social sciences, and humanities, can be admitted to the Master's study programme "Health Communication". Admission requirements entail an entrance examination wherein applicants' understanding of basic issues of public health is determined and skills to communicate about health, to understand the complexity of changes in human conduct are tested, etc. The entrance examination reveals students' critical and logical thinking skills that are very important in the study process and also in fulfilling practical tasks.

Annex 17.1 contains a table on the compliance of the study programme with the State education standard.

Annex 18.1 contains mapping of study courses for the achievement of learning outcomes of the study programme.

Annex 19 contains the plan of the study programme (for each type and form of implementation of the study programme).

Annex 20 contains descriptions of the study courses of the study programme.

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof)

2.1. Assessment of the relevance of the content of the study course/ module and the compliance with the needs of the relevant industry and labour market and with the trends in science. Provide information on how and whether the content of the study course/ module is updated in line with the development trends of the relevant industry, labour market, and science. In case of master's and doctoral study programmes, specify and provide the justification as to whether the degrees are awarded in view of the developments and findings in the field of science or artistic creation.

Health communication has been called the currency of the twenty-first century, it being understood as the increasing importance of this communication science in the field of health care system and public health. There are two aspects to the increase in the importance of health communication – health communication knowledge enables health care system employees to ensure effective communication in order to reach and affect their target audience, whereas effective communication allows individuals to access information that can help them understand their diagnosis and to be aware of health risks. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that health communication has a leading role in the creation of health literacy. Efficient communication based on basic principles and techniques of health communication can create both the motivation to avoid health risks and to form skills necessary for correctly reacting in case of an illness, etc. Health communication becomes increasingly important in the field of public health, in national political aspect, as well as in non-profit and commercial sectors.

Health communication is considered to be a discipline of communication, although it is closely related to the field of medicine, public health, and psychology. Health communication as a discipline of communication is defined by the fact that it is based on consumer behaviour studies typical of marketing communication, justified choice of communication channels, message positioning in accordance with the needs, attitudes, etc. of audience.

Given the broad tasks of health communication, it has become a multidisciplinary field which encompasses different competences, disciplines, and theoretical approaches – marketing and social marketing, mass communication, behavioural and social sciences, and other theoretical influences, including behavioural models, sociology, anthropology, social ecology, etc.

The topicality of the study programme is also determined by observable practical examples.

1. Professional, ethical, and legal aspects of communication between health care institutions and the society. Concerning specific cases involving patients, hospital communication department representatives not only have to comply with requirements on non-disclosure of patient data and health information but also have to provide valuable information to the society which allows to assess the activity of a particular institution, to establish deficiencies in practice, etc.
2. Efficiency of public health promotion and public habit change campaigns. Results of the campaigns suggest that these campaigns not always reach their aim, resulting from selection of an incorrect approach and strategy. It can be noted that public health promotion campaigns primarily use tactics of informing instead of a strategic and interdisciplinary approach that takes into account specificity of socially ecological system. In order to ensure successful habit change and health marketing, specific knowledge is needed in the field of health.
3. Crisis and risk communication in the field of health; for example, how to create crisis communication in the event of disasters, incidents with many victims, and epidemics with many deceased. How to create crisis communication professionally, ethically, legally, and

compliant with public interests. How to talk to patients with incurable diseases, how to communicate with the next of kin in case of death or critical condition of a relative, how to talk to the next of kin of a dying person about becoming a donor, etc.

The topicality and compliance of the study programme with modern needs of Latvia's society are established by structural changes during the last decade both in Latvia's society after 1991 by becoming an equal member in Western state media, communication and societal public space, and also radical changes in the field of communication and their use in different economic sectors and in society around the world.

Lecturers at the RSU Faculty of Communication and Faculty of Public Health and Social Welfare regularly consider the opinion expressed by employees of medical and public health institutions, mass media, as well as of non-governmental organisations and of public relations that the health sector lacks specifically trained communication professionals who would be able to create a competent dialogue based on knowledge with society on health matters.

On 26 January 2018, a survey was conducted on students of RSU professional Master's study programme "Health Management". 22 out of 23 respondents acknowledged that health communication is highly needed in the health care system and in communication with the society, as well as was the intention of RSU to create a multidisciplinary study programme was appreciated. The only negative response was justified by a rhetorical question as to whether there are enough institutions in Latvia who realise the need for such specialists. The respondent also suggested ensuring the study programme in English, thus encouraging RSU to become a pioneer in the academic field of health communication in the Baltic region. Health communication is a field undergoing the most dynamic development in the world and it is estimated that its significance will increase even more owing to development of medicine, changes in health care principles, increase of human life spans, decrease in the number of working population in Europe, etc. Thus, the discipline of health communication becomes increasingly popular in the EU Member States as well, not just in the USA where the development of theoretical framework of health communication takes place.

In Latvia, study programme "Health Communication" is unique. It is the only study programme in Latvia offering in-depth studies specifically in health communication. The content of the RSU study programme has been created so that individuals with both prior knowledge in social and health care sciences would be able to study there. It is a significant advantage of this study programme.

The study programme is managed by two heads of the programme – one of them coordinates implementation of study courses from the communication block, the other – implementation of health science study courses. However, given that the Master's degree is awarded in communication science, the chief head of the study programme is the coordinator of communication block. Regular alignment of information and opinions takes place between the involved RSU structural units and heads of the study programme.

Uniqueness and sustainability of the study programme are encoded in one of its main priorities – to ensure the synthesis of academic and professional knowledge and competences in health communication based on teaching staff's academic continuous improvement and attraction of specialists from the professional field of health communication.

The study programme prepares specialists for professional labour market of health communication and academic environment in Latvia and the European Union.

Currently, it is the only study programme of its kind in the Baltics whose content simultaneously combines understanding, knowledge, and competences of communication and public health processes.

In the 2019 winter admission, first students were admitted to, and undertook, the studies. The content of the study courses/modules is updated in accordance with the relevant industry, labour market, and science trends after receiving feedback from students at the end of particular study courses/modules.

2.2. Assessment of the interrelation between the information included in the study courses/ modules, the intended learning outcomes, the set aims and other indicators, the relation between the aims of the study course/ module and the aims and intended outcomes of the study programme. In case of a doctoral study programme, provide a description of the main research roadmaps and the impact of the study programme on research and other education levels.

The management of the study programme continuously works towards balancing the content of study courses in the context of aim achievement. Since the aim is to prepare Master's of social sciences in communication science who have theoretical knowledge and professional skills in mass communication, health sociology, communication ethics and psychology, in health and social marketing, and other spheres, both theoretical knowledge and practical skills of future Master's students in an analytical approach to information, its processing and interpretation are equally important.

Given the current developments in the field, a great deal of attention in studies is devoted to:

- formation of theoretical understanding;
- the development of research and analytical skills;
- the analysis and forecasting of socially political processes;
- the communication analysis of issues related to public health.

Overall, there have been thirteen learning outcomes defined for the study programme (see Point 1.1). For the purpose of creating a theoretical understanding, mastering of study courses is guaranteed by the first five (VKM-1, VKM-2, VKM-3, VKM-4, VKM-5, VLM-6) of these learning outcomes, i.e., students have to acquire the ability to demonstrate in-depth and broad knowledge and understanding. In order to ensure it, the content of the study programme is comprised of study courses "Public Health", "Health Sociology", "Trends and Problems of Modern Society", "Health Psychology", "Social Determinants of Health", "Biological Aspects of Health and Disease", "Epidemiology", "Interpersonal Communication and Internal Communication", "Health Promotion and Prevention", "Occupational and Environmental Health Hazards", "Global Health", etc.

The following five learning outcomes (VKM-6, VKM-7, VKM-8, VKM-9, VKM-10) are intended for the purpose of developing research and analytical skills: Study courses "Research Use, Methods in Health Communication", "Health Marketing and Marketing for Healthcare Organisation", "Critical Thinking", "Health Statistics" and the development and preliminary defence of the Master's thesis gives students the necessary ability to independently use theory, research methods and problem solving skills in order to conduct research activity or highly-qualified professional functions.

In order for students to become competent specialists who would be able to independently work in areas related to health communication, the acquisition of skills included in the last three learning outcomes (VKM-11, VKM-12, VKM-13) is intended. It is ensured by study courses "Health Communication and Social Marketing", "Risk and Crisis Communication", "Health Law. Patient Rights and Personal Data in the Public Communication", "Health Journalism", "Health Marketing and

Marketing for Healthcare Organisation”, etc.

It can be seen that the development strategy of the study programme has used the principle of competence intertwining – namely, different kind of knowledge and skills are acquired in different study courses in different stages of the curriculum in order to ensure and strengthen stable competences necessary in research and professional activity.

2.3. Assessment of the study implementation methods (including the evaluation methods) by providing the analysis of how the study implementation methods (including the evaluation methods) used in the study courses/ modules are selected, what they are, and how they contribute to the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study courses and the aims of the study programme. Provide an explanation of how the student-centred principles are taken into account in the implementation of the study process.

Study process is implemented mostly as interactive lectures, practical interactive classes or seminars and independent work of students. Both in lectures and in classes all advanced technologies available at RSU are used. In practical assignments, students develop health communication strategies, evaluate international health communication campaigns, analyse models of behaviour and possibilities of using them in practice, prepare advertising articles, conduct discourse analyses, etc.

The study process is organised in the form of modules/cycles by giving students the opportunity to focus on not more than two study courses. Studies at RSU are personalised, there are small groups (7-12 persons in a group), which gives students a possibility to ask questions they are interested in, to engage in discussions with lecturers and study colleagues. Problem-centred teaching strategies are used in the study process. All additional study materials are freely available to the students in the e-study environment. It also provides references to additional information sources for studying the specific issues, as well as materials for self-guided learning (for example, practical assignments that can be done at home with self-assessment algorithm).

Both formative and summative evaluation is used in studies. Formative evaluation takes place during everyday study process: by asking control questions to the students during the contact lessons, as well as by discussing the independent work of students that is practised during the study process. Summative evaluation takes place at the conclusion of each study course as a test or examination. Summative evaluation tests are organised in a written form (in paper format or electronically) or as oral discussions. At the conclusion of studies, the student selects a topic he or she is interested in and in cooperation with one's selected paper supervisor develops and defends the Bachelor's thesis.

By the end of each academic year, students are asked to complete the evaluation survey in RSU e-environment, wherein they can express their opinion and provide proposals both regarding the content of the study course and the methods of implementation thereof, as well as competences and work style of the lecturers. Therefore, study courses are updated each year in accordance with the evaluation given by the students. Representatives of the students are also involved in faculty councils ensuring representation of their opinion in decision-making.

RSU exercises a student-centred education, providing that:

- independently learning student is at the centre of the study process;
- learning outcomes are clearly formulated and known, and the student studies to achieve

them;

- students know and understand the learning outcomes defined for the study programme or course;
- evaluation of the student's achievements is formed in a way that it is possible to ensure whether and at what level the planned learning outcomes have been achieved;
- task of the teaching staff is to facilitate the studies of the student so that the student would achieve the set learning outcomes;
- it can be observed that the aggregate of outcomes of separate study courses forms the learning outcomes of the study programme.

Learning outcomes of the study programme are formulated in a student-centred way and they:

- establish a unified understanding for students and teaching staff regarding what is expected from the student at the end of the course or the programme;
- provide students with an opportunity to study more effectively, i.e. students clearly know what knowledge and skills they will obtain when they successfully complete the respective course. The students can also track what they have already learned and what they still have not learned, and what their progress is towards achieving the outcomes of the programme;
- present a tool for the teaching staff for organising the study process more effectively: lectures, seminars, group work, discussions, laboratory work, etc., by selecting topics and materials, as well as teaching strategies in accordance with the learning outcomes specified for the study course or study programme;
- create a mutual understanding between the teaching staff and colleagues regarding the achievement of which learning outcome the course is taken, and the respective learning method is selected;
- identify those areas where certain types of learning outcomes overlap or lack (by comparing courses and compliance thereof with the programme);
- aid the students in their choice on which courses to take in accordance with learning outcomes the student wishes to achieve;
- provide clear information for employers on knowledge and skills the students have obtained, as well as provide an opportunity to assess this knowledge and skills in accordance with the defined professional qualification.

The study implementation and assessment methods used promote the achievement of learning outcomes and aims of study programme.

2.4. If the study programme entails a traineeship, provide the analysis and assessment of the relation between the tasks of the traineeship included in the study programme and the learning outcomes of the study programme. Specify how the higher education institution/ college supports the students within the study programme regarding the fulfilment of the tasks set for students during the traineeship.

Not provided.

2.5. Analysis and assessment of the topics of the final theses of the students, their relevance in the respective field, including the labour market, and the evaluations of the final theses.

Thematic directions of students' Final papers are determined in relation to the development of field and labour market and topics and specialisation directions of lecturers and professors of the department, as well as those of implemented projects. However, given that students will select their topics independently and develop them together with heads of the study programme and research papers, Final papers may also be concerned with innovative topics and those that are different from previously mentioned ones. Students have completed only the first semester and started the second one; therefore, it is still impossible to provide an analysis and assessment of topics of Master's theses. At the same time, it must be noted that many students have already selected directions of their research paper which combine both their previously acquired knowledge and experience with the ones acquired in health communication. For example, work on the precision and compliance of health claims and information on product ingredients on food packages with EU legislation is planned. Moreover, a topic on the possibilities of affecting public attitude and human behaviour in cancer screening programmes has been selected. This paper will be part of Baltic States' research on the efficiency of screening programmes. Visiting Lecturer Dr. Kadi Lubi, who has conducted a large-scale research in Estonia on the efficiency of screening programmes (including that of communication campaigns), will manage research activities of Latvia's students in Latvia in cooperation with the National Health Service. Representatives of the field of health have expressed a recommendation to develop an interdisciplinary programme for decreasing the harmful effects of smoking in Latvia. This project is intended to be implemented as part of the operation of RSU Technology Transfer Office. In Master's theses, lecturers will offer to conduct studies that are topical, related to health and public health policy, implementation, result evaluation. Likewise, topics of the Master's theses will encompass topical issues related to the promotion of public health, education, and changes in health habits. The study programme will create close cooperation with national institutions (Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, National Health Service, Ministry of Health, municipalities, clinical university hospitals, etc.) by using secondary data on public health issues for research available in these institutions and in order to encourage these institutions to propose conducting studies in fields that are topical to the whole society, its groups, or to the health care system in general.

2.6. Analysis and assessment of the outcomes of the surveys conducted among the students, graduates, and employers, and the use of these outcomes for the improvement of the content and quality of studies by providing the respective examples.

In order to find out the opinion on the need for health communication specialists from these field specialists, potential employers were surveyed. Surveys were conducted in the period from November 2017 to February 2018.

Among the participants of the survey were:

- publishing house LLC "ŽURNĀLS SANTA";
- communication agency LLC "Divi gani sabiedriskās attiecības";
- public affairs company LLC "Baltic Communication Partners";
- association "Latvian Health Economics Association";
- association "Health Projects for Latvia";
- association "Papardes zieds";
- patient organisation, association "AGIHAS";

- national institution “Centre for Disease Prevention and Control”.

Based on the opinions of the organisation, the conclusion concerning the overall need for the study programme was that health communication specialists are necessary, and they would bring major benefits to the society.

Given the increase in human life span, demographic situation, the significance of patient and their family involvement in disease control and treatment process, widely available information in mass media on health issues, the main conclusions of employers are that there is a need for specialists who are able to critically evaluate and select information sources, to adequately talk about health issues, who have a grasp of communication strategies, techniques, and methods on how to work with an audience in order to promote behaviour which is beneficial to health.

In the 2019 winter admission, first students were admitted to, and undertook, studies. Management of the study programme values highly the assessment of the study process, its results, and the positive and negative aspects conducted by the students. Given that there are relatively few students and currently the study programme has been implemented for only one semester, it is possible to conduct qualitative research – both heads of the study programme regularly, several time during the semester, meet with students also to evaluate completed study courses and to prepare for the following ones, as well as to provide answers to students’ questions and to consider recommendations and experience. Students systematically evaluate the study process in a quantitative survey as well – at the conclusion of each study course, it is evaluated in detail in an anonymous survey. These data are a basis for the management of the study programme and of the department in further development of the study programme.

Overall, the survey data indicate that the students are mostly satisfied with studies and with the choice of the study programme and the institution of higher education, although they mention that the acquisition of some study courses proved to be difficult due to insufficient prior knowledge. Students emphasise that the content of the study course is useful, interesting; however, its acquisition requires more time and work than initially thought. Students are particularly satisfied with the availability of information and also with the material and technical base and highly-qualified lecturers. The diversity of study elements (lectures, classes, practical tasks) is evaluated positively. Students have indicated subjectivity and unclear criteria as deficiencies in course evaluations; therefore, attention should be paid to the development of clear evaluation criteria, as well as in their transparent use.

Students are notified by the assistant of RSU Department of Communication Studies, the heads of the study programme, and by the head of the study course on the necessity to fill in the evaluation surveys. However, evaluation of some study courses is not fully ensured. The heads of study courses must be encouraged to more actively ask students to evaluate their study courses.

The analysis of results takes place once a year at the end of the year of studies. Given that the Master’s study programme has relatively few students, it is specifically this kind of qualitative in-depth information that gives a more precise and constructive idea of the programme and the desires of students. Information obtained from different channels is regularly discussed with heads of the study programme, head of the department, and lecturers involved. This is done with an aim to qualitatively improve the study process – content, planning, and methods, including the mentioned evaluation criteria and methods.

Feedback on students’ comments is given in parallel with the study process, but particularly during the mentioned meeting times where improvements are discussed, suggestions are considered, and the implemented and planned improvements are made known.

2.7. Provide the assessment of the options of the incoming and outgoing mobility of the students, the dynamics of the number of the used opportunities, and the recognition of the study courses acquired during the mobility.

Given that it is the only study programme in the Baltics and that it has been recently launched, student mobility is not ensured yet. Lecturers from the Baltic States have shown great interest in the study programme by willing to get acquainted with RSU experience and to become visiting lecturers of the study programme. In the academic year 2019/2020, Associate Professor Kadi Lubi from Tallinn Health Care College will participate in the study programme.

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme)

3.1. Assessment of the compliance of the resources and provision (study provision, scientific support (if applicable), informative provision (including libraries), material and technical provision, and financial provision) with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the learning outcomes to be achieved by providing the respective examples. Whilst carrying out the assessment, it is possible to refer to the information provided for in the criteria set forth in Part II, Chapter 3, sub-paragraphs 3.1 to 3.3.

For more information on the description of the overall resources and provisioning, material and technical base and financial base available for RSU study programmes see the description of the study direction. Overall, the provision of resources is very good and is being developed (for example, by regularly identifying and assessing the latest specialised literature in the field in cooperation with RSU library, to the extent possible, providing it to student in both digital and paper formats). There is no need for specific resources to implement the study programme.

In the Health Communication programme, the study process is organised in modules (cycles), giving students the opportunity to focus on no more than two study courses at a time. The learning of the study programme is individualised; it takes place in small groups (7-12 students), thus providing students with the opportunity to ask questions of their interest and to learn the study programme in a more effective way. All study materials are freely available to students in the e-learning environment and include additional reference to additional information sources. The number of students who pay tuition fee increases with each new academic year, as the programme becomes more and more topical and professionals with such knowledge will be needed. The specialisation of communication professionals in health sector is determined by a number of factors. There are two major trends in the communication sector: convergence of communication trends (advertising, digital communication, public relations, etc.) and specialisation of professionals in a particular field - IT, fashion, energy, health, etc. As a result of these trends, there is a growing demand for health communication professionals who have specific knowledge of both public health issues and communication and specific nature of communication related to social and health issues. Moreover, it should be noted that the demand will also be determined by efforts of national governments to

promote public health, which has now become the economic asset of every country - a capable person.

Although the launch of a new study programme does not necessarily result in a sufficiently large group of students, it is expected that the number of students within the programme will increase significantly over time, understanding the demand of the labour market.

3.2. Assessment of the study provision and scientific support, including the resources provided within the cooperation with other science institutes and institutions of higher education (applicable to the doctoral study programmes).

Not applicable.

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (4. Teaching Staff)

4.1. Analysis and assessment of the changes to the composition of the teaching staff over the reporting period and their impact on the study quality.

Highly-qualified lecturers, who are field experts and have specialised in the topics of a particular study course, are involved in the implementation of the study direction. The majority of the lecturers involved hold a doctoral degree, thus providing students with an academic vision and topical message regarding issues in the field.

Lecturers, whose qualification and abilities are on a high level and are greatly valued in the field, are involved in the implementation of the study direction and programmes; therefore, changes in the teaching staff are insignificant. Due to the thoroughness and specificity of some segments of content, additional visiting lecturers and lecturers of other courses (for example, "Public Health", "Organization and Economics of Health Care", "Health Promotion and Prevention", etc.) are attracted.

Participation in research activities is mandatory for the RSU full-time lecturers which is regulated in employees' job descriptions. In accordance with the type of academic position, the following proportion of employee's duties and responsibilities in scientific and research activities has been established.

- 30 % of the working hours the assistant spends doing scientific and research work;
- 15 % of the working hours the lecturer spends doing scientific and research work;
- 20 % of the working hours the assistant professor, associate professor, professor spend doing scientific and research work.

Distribution of responsibility in the structural unit can be changed by the head of the structural unit by agreeing with the employee in accordance with the plan of pedagogical work and projects to be implemented.

Results of scientific activities of the academic staff are aggregated once a year by including them in

the scientific activity report, as well as for some groups of the staff they are related to the principles of remuneration and motivation. The achievements of lecturers are included in their CVs (see Annex 6.2).

RSU constantly plans and implements activities that are aimed at the motivation of academic staff to participate in high-level scientific and research work, particularly by associate professors and professors (aim to reach the volume of scientific work amounting to 60 % of the working hours) that will promote involvement of new specialists in field research, as well as will contribute to the overall development of science on a State and international level.

Since licensing of the study programme, the teaching staff has been regularly improving its qualification by participating in scientific and artistic creation projects, in conferences and by publishing articles in academic journals. Since licensing of the study programme, three lecturers have defended their dissertations and received their doctoral degree Lauma Sprinģe (RSU, 2017), *Dr. med.* Dins Šmits (RSU, 2018), *Dr. paed.* Inese Stars (University of Latvia, 2019). Since licensing of the study programme, one lecturer has been elected as associate professor – Inese Gobiņa.

4.2. Assessment of the compliance of the qualification of the teaching staff members (academic staff members, visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers, and visiting assistants) involved in the implementation of the study programme with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the provisions set out in the respective regulatory enactments. Provide information on how the qualification of the teaching staff members contributes to the achievement of the learning outcomes.

30 lecturers are involved in the implementation of the study programme: five professors and six associate professors, seven assistant professors and one acting assistant professor, five lecturers, three acting lecturers and four invited lecturers. 26 members of the teaching staff (83 %) work full-time at the RSU. All members of the teaching staff who are involved as lecturers or visiting lecturers in the study programme hold at least a Master's degree in a related field of science.

Experts approved in the sub-field of medicine at the Latvian Council of Science are involved in the implementation of the study programme: four in public health, three in communication science, two in psychology, one in law, and two in sociology. Two lecturers develop their dissertations that are directly related to health communication.

The qualification of teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programme complies with the implementation conditions and requirements of regulatory enactments and ensures the achievement of aims of the study programme and respective study courses, as well as learning outcomes. When the academic Master's study programme "Health Communication" was already in the process of creation, research directions and fields of expertise of the lecturers at the department were taken into account. Therefore, lecturers both from the RSU Faculty of Communication and Faculty of Public Health and Social Welfare participate in the implementation of the study programme.

It must be emphasised that the majority of professors and associate professors from the Department of Public Health and Epidemiology participate in the implementation of the study programme – Prof. Ģirts Briģis, Assoc. Prof. Anita Villeruša, Assoc. Prof. Ieva Strēle and Assoc. Prof. Inese Gobiņa. Therefore, it is guaranteed that the studies will provide in-depth and extended

knowledge and understanding about topicalities in the field (VKM-1, VKM-2, VKM-3, BKM-4, VKM-5), will also encourage students to be involved in research and analytics (KMM-6, VKm-7, VKM-8, VKM-9, VKM-10), and will develop students' ability to plan, implement, and also to assess and evaluate (VKM-11, VKM-12, VKM-13).

The achievement of these learning outcomes also guarantees the participation in the implementation of studies of such well-known and experienced specialists in social sciences of Latvia as Ainārs Dimants, Aija Kažoka, Dins Šmits, etc.

Head of the study programme from the Faculty of Communication Vita Savicka, who has more than 20 years of experience in the academic and practical field of public relations, specialises in behavioural change communication, including in health communication. Whereas the other head of the study programme Aija Bukova-Žideļūna who represents the Faculty of Public Health and Social Welfare offers her experience in both the fields of health and communication by modelling different situations, identifying and formulating variables for public health situation analysis.

For more information see the description of the study direction.

4.3. Information on the number of the scientific publications of the academic staff members, involved in the implementation of the doctoral study programme, as published during the reporting period by listing the most significant publications published in Scopus or WoS CC indexed journals. As for the social sciences, humanitarian sciences, and the science of art, the scientific publications published in ERIH+ indexed journals may be additionally specified (if applicable).

Not applicable.

4.4. Information on the participation of the academic staff, involved in the implementation of the doctoral study programme, in scientific projects as project managers or prime contractors/ subproject managers/ leading researchers by specifying the name of the relevant project, as well as the source and the amount of the funding. Provide information on the reporting period (if applicable).

Not applicable.

4.5. Provide examples of the involvement of the academic staff in the scientific research and/or artistic creation activities both at national and at international level (in the fields related to the content of the study programme), as well as the use of the obtained information in the study process.

RSU academic staff is involved in national and international scientific research; for example, in many projects of the international programme "INTERREG Baltic Sea Region" that also cover

aspects related to health communication. In the academic year 2019/2020, there is a plan to participate in study “Breast Cancer Screening” of the Tallinn Health Care College where the efficiency of communication in the implementation of screening programmes will be studied and to implement a project of fund Voldemārs of LCCI by conducting “Harm Reduction Strategy for Promoting Restriction of Smoking”. Students are involved in the studies. Data from the studies will be integrated by explaining the relation of theory and practice in the content of some courses.

In 2020, under the guidance of academic staff, the students will be involved in the research of what determines the effectiveness of communication in promoting female participation in breast-cancer screening programs. Two Master’s Theses are being drafted on this subject. Both research methodology and results are discussed in the courses “Health Marketing” and “Lobbying”.

Table 1. Study course implementers

Name of the course	Head of the course	Scientific degree	Acknowledgement for involvement in research
Occupational and environmental health hazards	Žanna Martinsone	<i>Dr. med.</i>	Senior Researcher Institute for Occupational Safety and Environmental Health, Laboratory of Hygiene and Occupational Diseases of IOSEH
Epidemiology	Ieva Strēle	<i>Dr. med.</i>	European Commission, Eurostat: individual expert in Morbidity statistics task force
Global Health	Anda Kīvīte-Urtāne	<i>Dr. med.</i>	Leading Researcher, Member of Scientific Council Institute of Public Health
Disability: Perceptions, Experience and Policy	Agita Lūse Baiba Baikovska	<i>Dr. phil.</i> <i>Mg. soc.</i>	Lecturer, Faculty of Communication
Communication Theories, Principles and Ethics	Sarmīte Mienerte	<i>Dr. phil.</i>	Lecturer
Critical Thinking	Artūrs Utināns	<i>Dr. med.</i>	Assistant Professor, Head Doctor at the Psychosomatic Clinic
Lobbying and Advocacy in Health Communication	Vita Savicka	<i>Mg. soc.</i>	Lecturer, Faculty of Communication

Name of the course	Head of the course	Scientific degree	Acknowledgement for involvement in research
Media System, Media Audience and Communication Effects	Anda Rožukalne	<i>Dr. sc. soc.</i>	Professor, Dean of the Faculty of Communication
Trends and Problems of Modern Society	Rasma Rungule Taņa Lāce	<i>Dr. soc.</i> <i>Mg. soc.</i>	—
Research Use, Methods in Health Communication	Ilze Rozenberga	<i>Mg. soc.</i>	Lecturer, Faculty of Communication
Legal Protection of Professional Activity	Jānis Ivans Mihailovs	<i>Dr. iur.</i>	Lecturer, Faculty of Communication
Risk and Crisis Communication	Ruta Siliņa	<i>Mg. soc.</i>	Lecturer, Faculty of Communication
Public Health	Lauma Sprinģe	<i>Dr. med.</i>	Acting Leading Researcher, Institute of Public Health
Interpersonal Communication and Internal Communication	Guna Zvirbule	<i>Mg. soc.</i>	Lecturer, Faculty of Communication
Discourse Analysis in Healthcare Sector	Sergejs Kruks Aija Kažoka	<i>Dr. soc.</i> <i>Mg. soc.</i>	Professor, Faculty of Communication Lecturer, Faculty of Communication
Organization and Economics of Health Care	Dins Šmits	<i>Dr. med.</i>	—
Health Communication and Social Marketing	Vita Savicka	<i>Mg. soc.</i>	—
Health Marketing and Marketing for Healthcare Organisation	Kadi Lubi	<i>Dr. soc.</i>	—
Health Psychology	Gunta Freimane	<i>Mg. soc.</i>	—

Name of the course	Head of the course	Scientific degree	Acknowledgement for involvement in research
Social Determinants of Health	Inese Stars	<i>Mg. soc.</i>	—
Health Sociology	Vents Sīlis	<i>Dr. sc. soc.</i>	—
Health Statistics	Diāna Kalniņa	<i>Mg. soc.</i>	—
Health Law. Patient Rights and Personal Data in the Public Communication	Santa Slokenberga	<i>Dr. iur.</i>	—
Biological Aspects of Health and Disease	Helēna Kārklīņa	<i>Dr. med.</i>	—
Health Promotion and Prevention	Aija Bukova-Žideļuna	<i>Mg. sc. sal., Mg. sc. soc.</i>	Acting Researcher, Institute of Public Health
Health Journalism	Ainārs Dimants Aija Kažoka	<i>Dr. soc. Mg. soc.</i>	—

Lecturers are professionals in their field and leaders of public opinion with a longstanding academic experience who often express their opinion in the media and public space about developments and issues. Lecturers participate in different kind of research that is implemented at RSU Institute of Public Health or at another RSU structural unit, or in EU projects; for example, “Horizon 2020”, etc. Many lecturers are also in placement; for example, Ruta Siliņa and Vita Savicka – in the field of public relations, Aija Kažoka – in health journalism, Diāna Kārklīņa un Aija Kažoka – in research agencies.

4.6. Assessment of the cooperation between the teaching staff members by specifying the mechanisms used to promote the cooperation and ensure the interrelation between the study courses/ modules. Specify also the proportion of the number of the students and the teaching staff within the study programme (at the moment of the submission of the Self-Assessment Report).

Uniqueness and sustainability of the study programme are encoded in one of its main priorities – to ensure the synthesis of academic and professional knowledge and competences in health communication based on teaching staff’s continuous academic improvement and attraction of specialists from the professional field of health communication.

A mechanism for mutual cooperation among the teaching staff in order to promote improvement and interrelation of study courses/modules has been created. Heads of the study programme analyse the content of study courses and design the development of courses in accordance with the

sequence of acquired knowledge in order to ensure that acquired knowledge in these study courses is considered from different perspectives and the acquired competence would be examined from another aspect. For example, models of behaviour are acquired in study course “Health Communication”, then these models are used in practical assignments when developing communication strategies in study course “Health Communication and Social Marketing”, and in study course “Research Use, Methods in Health Communication” efficiency of communication in the use of different models is determined.

During the implementation of the study programme, cooperation with industry representatives and employers takes place. This cooperation takes place:

- by lecturers participating in the study process – those lecturers who work at RSU for a fixed-term or are invited for the implementation of a particular study course or lecture, or of practical classes and who are professionals in their field, are aware of topical public health issues, methods for solving them, have knowledge of statistical data, political documents, practical examples;
- by employers and representatives of professional associations participating in the defence of Master’s theses;
- in the form of student and employer surveys, where graduate surveys are also intended;
- by students, graduates, field and employer representatives participating in Quality Council meetings.

When calculating the total number of lecturers, as indicated in the accreditation documents of the Academic Master’s study programme “Health Communication”, the total number of lecturers involved in the implementation of the programme is 33, while the total number of students was 8 on 3 October 2019, so the ratio of students and lecturers is 0.24. However, as already explained in Paragraph 3.1, the study programme is new and still needs to be stabilised; and it should be noted that part of the study courses is implemented jointly for students of several study programmes, thus sharing resources. The joint implementation of study courses strengthens the financial cost-effectiveness of study programmes and supports interdisciplinary cooperation between students.

Annexes

III. Description of the Study Programme - 1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme		
Compliance of the joint study programme with the provisions of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (table)		
Statistics on the students over the reporting period	16_pielik_VKM_Statistika_eng.pdf	16_pielik_VKM_Statistika_lv.pdf
III. Description of the Study Programme - 2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof		
Compliance of the study programme with the State Education Standard	17.1_pielik_Atbalst_lzgl_STand_lv.pdf	17.1_pielik_Atbalst_lzgl_STand_lv.pdf
Compliance of the qualification to be acquired upon completion of the study programme with the professional standard (if applicable)		
Compliance of the study programme with the specific regulatory framework applicable to the relevant field (if applicable)		
Mapping of the study courses/ modules for the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study programme	18.1_pielik_StK_St-rezult_kartejums_VK_eng.pdf	18.1_pielik_StK_StRt_kartejums_lv.pdf
Curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme)	19_pielik_VK_planojums_ENG.pdf	19_pielik_VK_planojums_LV.pdf
Descriptions of the study courses/ modules	20_pielik_VK_StK_ENG.pdf	20_pielik_VK_StK_LV.pdf
Description of the Study Direction - Other mandatory attachments		
Sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme.	24-1_AMSP_VK_diploms_gatavs_ENG.pdf	24-1_AMSP_VK_diploms_gatavs.pdf
Description of the Study Programme - Other mandatory attachments		
Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college will provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme or at another higher education institution/ college (a contract with another accredited higher education institution/ college), in case the implementation of the study programme is discontinued	24.2_pielikums_Apliecinajums_par_citu_StP_IKZ_parakstits_tulk.pdf	24.2_pielikums_Apliecinajums_par_citu_StP_IKZ_parakstits.pdf
Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college guarantees to the students a compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the higher education institution/ college (actions or failure to act) and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme	24.3_pielikums_Apliecinajums_par_zaudejumiem_IKZ_parakstits_eng.pdf	24.3_pielikums_Apliecinajums_par_zaudejumiem_IKZ_parakstits.pdf
Confirmation of the higher education institution/ college that the teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language according to European language levels (see the levels under www.europass.lv), if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language.	24.5_pielik_Apliecin_anglu_val_StV_IKZ_parakstits_eng.pdf	24.5_pielik_Apliecin_anglu_val_StV_IKZ_parakstits.pdf
If the study programmes in the study direction subject to the assessment are doctoral study programmes, a confirmation that at least five teaching staff members with doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field or sub-field of science, in which the study programme has intended to award a scientific degree.		
If academic study programmes are implemented within the study direction, a document confirming that the academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the provisions set out in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause three of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education	24-7_pielik_apliecinajums_AMSP_VK_eng.pdf	24-7_pielik_apliecinajums_AMSP_VK_lv.pdf
Sample (or samples) of the study agreement	24.8_pielik_Studiju_lig_eng.pdf	24.8_pielik_Studiju_lig_lv.pdf
If academic study programmes for less than 250 full-time students are implemented within the study direction, the opinion of the Council for Higher Education shall be attached in compliance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.	24.9_pielik_AIP_atzinums_eng.pdf	24.9_pielik_AIP_atzinums_lv.pdf

Journalism

Title of the higher education institution	<i>Information and Communication Sciences</i>
ProcedureStudyProgram.Name	<i>Journalism</i>
Education classification code	<i>43321</i>
Type of the study programme	<i>Academic bachelor study programme</i>
Name of the study programme director	<i>Anna</i>
Surname of the study programme director	<i>Peipiņa</i>
E-mail of the study programme director	<i>anna.peipina@rsu.lv</i>
Title of the study programme director	<i>Mg. soc.</i>
Phone of the study programme director	
Goal of the study programme	<i>To prepare bachelors of communication science with theoretical knowledge and professional skills in journalism, basics of media operation, professional ethics of journalism, who have acquired information collection methods, news journalism, journalism genres and communication principles of different types of media, who are able to analyse and forecast socially political processes, to conduct independent media content studies in order to work successfully in the press, broadcasting and internet media as journalists, producers, editors, and commentators. Graduates of the Bachelor's study programme may continue studies in the academic Master's study programme "Communication and Media Studies" at the Faculty of Communication.</i>
Tasks of the study programme	<p><i>To create and manage the studies so that students would acquire:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1) journalism theory and practice in news agencies, the press, broadcasting mass media, and in the internet media;</i> <i>2) theoretical knowledge in different communication science subjects and communication research methods that are necessary for understanding the patterns of communication;</i> <i>3) theoretical knowledge in the history of ideas, in politics, economics, sociology, communication psychology that is necessary in order to successfully understand the development processes in society and to explain them to media audiences;</i> <i>4) journalism approaches to the press, television, radio, internet, and other media;</i> <i>5) modern communication technologies which include editing and processing of photographic, video, and audio information, as well as communication in social media;</i> <i>6) journalism genres; investigative journalism;</i> <i>7) journalism ethics and legislation;</i> <i>8) TV and radio journalism;</i> <i>9) photojournalism and visual communication;</i> <i>10) a good command of the Latvian language and a foreign language;</i> <i>11) the ability to present ideas, to speak in front of an audience;</i> <i>12) and use theoretical base in communication science for conducting research;</i> <i>13) skills for using modern communication technologies.</i>

Results of the study programme	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Understanding, knowledge, and ability to critically evaluate the work of a journalist in news agencies, internet media, newspapers, journal editorial office, TV and radio news services that are acquired during the study placement.</i> 2. <i>Understanding of communication science, its principal theories, concepts, notions, mass communication theories, media audiences.</i> 3. <i>Specialised knowledge, ability to analyse, explain and to substantiate information on photojournalism, internet, radio, and TV journalism, investigative journalism, and other directions of journalism.</i> 4. <i>The ability to professionally participate in editorial work of different media, to take initiative in conducting one's own individual work and when working in a team.</i> 5. <i>Acquired practical abilities in the creation and production of content in different types of media, the skill to use theoretical knowledge in practice.</i> 6. <i>Knowledge on information collection methods in journalism, functions and ethics of journalism.</i> 7. <i>Graduate of the study programme can acquire, select, evaluate, aggregate, and pass on information in textual, video, and audio formats; evaluate sources of information in a professionally responsible manner, create journalistic contributions in different genres and formats, plan, edit, and produce content in different types of media.</i> 8. <i>From perspectives of professional criteria of journalism is able to critically evaluate reality, respond to it, and reflect it in accordance with the acquired theoretical knowledge and professional skills.</i> 9. <i>After graduating from the study programme, journalists and communication specialists are able: to plan and manage media content creation processes individually and by working in a team; assume responsibility for decision taking in unforeseeable working conditions; independently acquire, select, and analyse information and use it; take decisions and solve problems in the field of communication science and in the daily work or journalism; demonstrate an understanding of professional ethics of journalism; evaluate the impact of one's professional activity, participate in the development of journalism and media activity field.</i> 10. <i>The ability to solve professional issues, collect information and create content in the English language.</i> 11. <i>Fluency in one EU language (except for English) or in the Russian language.</i> 12. <i>Understanding of media language and its professional use.</i> 13. <i>Knowledge and skills in applying a scientific approach in the history of ideas and in the analysis of social processes.</i> 14. <i>Knowledge of research methods, skills to use it for studies in a professional environment and to analyse research data, ability to make decisions when designing and implementing social science research.</i>
Final examination upon the completion of the study programme	<i>Bachelor's thesis</i>

Study programme forms

Full time studies - 3 years - latvian

Study type and form	<i>Full time studies</i>
Duration in full years	3
Duration in month	0
Language	<i>latvian</i>
Amount (CP)	120
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Secondary education; CE certificate in Latvian; CE certificate in Mathematics, CE certificate in a foreign language or an examination document of an international testing institution. For foreign applicants • Completed secondary education attested by originals or certified copies of the secondary education diploma and official transcript. • Final/Last secondary school semester and exam grades included in the secondary school leaving diploma and the official transcript in compulsory subjects – mathematics, English (results of the internationally recognised English test are also allowed for submission). Should the management of the study programme decide to offer the study programme in English medium to international applicants, additional compulsory subjects can be added to the ones mentioned above. (Unsatisfactory grades are not admissible in any of the subjects included in the diploma and the official transcript (in conformity with the secondary education grading scale of the respective country)). • Two recommendation letters. • Applicant's motivation letter.</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Bachelor of Social Sciences in Communication Science</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Rīga Stradiņš University	RĪGA	DZIRCIEMA IELA 16, KURZEMES RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1007

Part time studies - 3 years, 6 months - latvian

Study type and form	<i>Part time studies</i>
Duration in full years	3
Duration in month	6
Language	<i>latvian</i>
Amount (CP)	120

Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Secondary education; CE certificate in Latvian; CE certificate in Mathematics, CE certificate in a foreign language or an examination document of an international testing institution. For foreign applicants • Completed secondary education attested by originals or certified copies of the secondary education diploma and official transcript. • Final/Last secondary school semester and exam grades included in the secondary school leaving diploma and the official transcript in compulsory subjects – mathematics, English (results of the internationally recognised English test are also allowed for submission). Should the management of the study programme decide to offer the study programme in English medium to international applicants, additional compulsory subjects can be added to the ones mentioned above. (Unsatisfactory grades are not admissible in any of the subjects included in the diploma and the official transcript (in conformity with the secondary education grading scale of the respective country)). • Two recommendation letters. • Applicant's motivation letter.</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Bachelor of Social Sciences in Communication Science</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Rīga Stradiņš University	RĪGA	DZIRCIEMA IELA 16, KURZEMES RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1007

Part time studies - 3 years, 6 months - english

Study type and form	<i>Part time studies</i>
Duration in full years	<i>3</i>
Duration in month	<i>6</i>
Language	<i>english</i>
Amount (CP)	<i>120</i>
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Secondary education; CE certificate in Latvian; CE certificate in Mathematics, CE certificate in a foreign language or an examination document of an international testing institution. For foreign applicants • Completed secondary education attested by originals or certified copies of the secondary education diploma and official transcript. • Final/Last secondary school semester and exam grades included in the secondary school leaving diploma and the official transcript in compulsory subjects – mathematics, English (results of the internationally recognised English test are also allowed for submission). Should the management of the study programme decide to offer the study programme in English medium to international applicants, additional compulsory subjects can be added to the ones mentioned above. (Unsatisfactory grades are not admissible in any of the subjects included in the diploma and the official transcript (in conformity with the secondary education grading scale of the respective country)). • Two recommendation letters. • Applicant's motivation letter.</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Bachelor of Social Sciences in Communication Science</i>

Qualification to be obtained (in english)	
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Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Rīga Stradiņš University	RĪGA	DZIRCIEMA IELA 16, KURZEMES RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1007

Full time studies - 3 years - english

Study type and form	<i>Full time studies</i>
Duration in full years	<i>3</i>
Duration in month	<i>0</i>
Language	<i>english</i>
Amount (CP)	<i>120</i>
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Secondary education; CE certificate in Latvian; CE certificate in Mathematics, CE certificate in a foreign language or an examination document of an international testing institution. For foreign applicants • Completed secondary education attested by originals or certified copies of the secondary education diploma and official transcript. • Final/Last secondary school semester and exam grades included in the secondary school leaving diploma and the official transcript in compulsory subjects – mathematics, English (results of the internationally recognised English test are also allowed for submission). Should the management of the study programme decide to offer the study programme in English medium to international applicants, additional compulsory subjects can be added to the ones mentioned above. (Unsatisfactory grades are not admissible in any of the subjects included in the diploma and the official transcript (in conformity with the secondary education grading scale of the respective country)). • Two recommendation letters. • Applicant's motivation letter.</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Bachelor of Social Sciences in Communication Science</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Rīga Stradiņš University	RĪGA	DZIRCIEMA IELA 16, KURZEMES RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1007

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme)

1.1. Description and analysis of changes in study programme parameters that have taken place since the issue of the previous accreditation certificate of study direction or the license of study programme if study programme is not included in the accreditation page of the study direction

Nr.	Parameter	Analysis of changes
1.	Study direction	—
2.	Name of the study programme	—
3.	Code of the study programme in accordance with the Latvian Education Classification	—
4.	Director of the study programme	The Head of the study programme has changed due to the fact that A.Rožukalne, the former Head of the study programme, was elected the Dean of the Faculty of Communication. Now the Head of the study programme is A. Peipina, the strength of who is the close ties with employers.
5.	Scientific degree of the head of the study programme	A. Peipina holds a Master's degree in Social Sciences.
6.	Aim of the study programme	Adjustments to the goal of the programme have been made in compliance with the mapping of the learning outcomes and considering the current developments in the labour market.
7.	Objectives of the study programme	—
8.	Learning outcomes to be achieved	Annex 18.1 provides information regarding the analysis of the learning outcomes performed during the mapping process. The learning outcomes have been adjusted considering the results of the mapping and current labour market developments.

Nr.	Parameter	Analysis of changes
9.	Final examination upon the completion of the study programme	—
10.	Form and type of the study programme	—
11.	Duration of the study programme	—
12.	Language in which the study programme is implemented	During the course of accreditation, it is intended to include English as an implementation language, although there are currently no specific plans to start offering studies in English. According to the plan for the development of the study direction (see Annex 4.1) it is planned to set up a working group to evaluate the extension of the possibilities for the implementation of study programmes.
13.	Amount of the study programme (CP, preferably also ECTS)	—
14.	Admission requirements	—
15.	The degree, to be awarded	—
16.	The professional qualification to be awarded	—
17.	Place of implementation	—

1.2. Analysis and assessment of the statistical data on the students of the respective study programme, the dynamics of the number of the students, and the factors affecting the changes to the number of the students. The analysis shall be broken down in the different study forms, types, and languages.

The study programme “Journalism” is one of the four study programmes implemented in the study direction “Information and Communication Science” at the Faculty of Communication. Each year, 20 students are admitted to paid places and two students for budget places that is subsidised by the Rīga Stradiņš University. In February of the first year of studies of the academic year 2018/2019, there were 17 students, in the second year of studies – 11 students, in the third year of studies – 13 students. Several factors attribute to the changes (decrease) in the number of students across years of studies. Firstly, the study programme is funded from resources of private individuals which promotes instability and dependence from the number of students, as well as unfair mutual competition between state universities (since other universities have state-funded study places). Therefore, there is a second factor – the need for students to combine studies with a part-time or full-time job which often impacts the quality of studies or even leads to quitting their studies. The third factor is the wrong idea about the selected profession which has been formed out of ideas and stereotypes circulating in society.

In order to promote the recognition of the study programme, it is marketed by organising various marketing campaigns, by conducting lectures at the National Library of Latvia, participating in the development of pupil scientific research works and organising communication competition and events for the broader society (conferences, seminars, discussions).

Annex 16 contains statistical data on students in the reporting period.

The study programme is accredited for full-time and part-time studies, but only full-time studies are currently being implemented (see Annex 16 Student Statistics within the Reporting Period). According to the Study Direction development plan until 2023, considering the dynamics of the number of students and the results of market research, the availability of resources, workload of lecturers, profitability, etc., the Faculty of Communication will consider the possibility to start also part-time implementation of the study programme. At the time of accreditation, the study programme is also submitted for implementation in English, however, the management of the study programme does not have any specific plans for the next two years.

1.3. Analysis and assessment of the interrelation between the name of the study programme, the degree or professional qualification to be acquired or the degree and professional qualification to be acquired, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and the admission requirements.

The conducted mapping of learning outcomes of the study programme and the study courses allows ascertaining that the study programme and study courses comply with EQF/LQF level 6 and requirements set out in regulatory enactments and ensures a student-centred approach. Learning outcomes of the study courses are mainly mutually consistent and coherent. At the same time, this mapping has become a clear and justified basis for the improvement of study course descriptions.

As a result of the mapping of the study programme, it was established that:

- overall the study programme offers substantiated theoretical and practical study courses that hone students' knowledge and skills, improve competence in communication theory and practice, the understanding of social and cultural processes in certain fields of journalism, conducting research in communication, as well as prepares them for work in different professional fields related to media;
- study programme's courses have been created successively; however, when further

developing study courses and specifying their formulation, it is necessary to emphasise the skill to work under changing and unclear circumstances, and self-development in accordance with the formulation included in the EQF.

The learning outcomes are related to the ability to plan and manage media content creation in shifting labour market circumstances; to independently acquire, select, and analyse information and use it; make decisions and solve problems in the field of communication science and in the daily work of a journalist; understand professional ethics of journalism; participate in the development of journalism and media activity field. Likewise, learning outcomes are related to efficient use of the Latvian language, since the field of communication is based on language knowledge and its use. Since the literature used in studies is primarily in English, students undergo their placement and work in a global business environment, which is why foreign language skills are essential. Students are offered to master not only English but also, French, Spanish and Russian as the second elective foreign language;

- The RSU study programme stands out among similar types of study programmes offered by other institutions of higher education in terms of active updating of content in accordance with the shifting labour market and with an emphasis on professionalism and professional ethics. Given that the situation in the media both in Latvia and globally undergoes rapid changes (decline of traditional media; digitalisation, emergence of social media), an important place in the content of the study programme is given to the media as the fourth power in the democratic process and for maintaining the true values of journalism. Content and structure of study programmes of the study direction ensure knowledge and skills which provide an opportunity to work in different positions and levels in the field of communication in public and private sector, as well as to work independently as an author, producer, consultant of communication content, as well as to establish enterprises connected to the field of communication. Graduates of the study programme are ready for work and are successfully employed in news agencies (LETA), public media (LTV, Latvijas Radio, LSM.lv), on internet platforms (Delfi, TVNet), and in commercial media (NRA, "Diena", publishing house "SANTA"). Owing to the practical skills acquired on a sufficient level, students work as reporters, journalists, editors, producers, and editors-in-chief at the time of their two placements.

The study programme is based on stable traditions and reputation created in the RSU communication direction, on qualification and experience of lecturers, the opportunity to use the potential of communication and sociology doctoral students and to involve field professionals and recognised researchers in the implementation of the study programme. An essential guarantee for qualitative studies is the e-studies environment and the chance to use their own "Student Media" for improving the necessary skills and competences.

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof)

2.1. Assessment of the relevance of the content of the study course/ module and the compliance with the needs of the relevant industry and labour market and with the trends in science. Provide information on how and whether the content of the study course/ module is updated in line with the development trends of the relevant industry, labour market, and science. In case of master's and doctoral study programmes, specify and

provide the justification as to whether the degrees are awarded in view of the developments and findings in the field of science or artistic creation.

The content of the study programme is constantly updated by using the latest studies, communication science findings, and the necessary skills acquired in the field of communication as well. They are introduced in all study courses. For example, classes of “Critical Thinking in Journalism” are introduced in the study course “Methods and Genres of Journalism”; students acquire the creation of online platforms and editing of photographs, audio, and video content in the study course “Modern Communication Technologies”; the study course “Mass Communication Theories” offers the latest theory on network society, multimodality, and interactivity. Similarly, the content of all study courses is updated every academic year.

After following labour market trends, the following changes have been made in recent years:

- study course “Student Media” has been improved in order to involve all students in media work and to strengthen professional skills in practice; web portal of students’ media “Runā skaļāk!” has been changed by making it more modern, dynamic, and richer in the content;
- study course “Sports Journalism” has been updated in the second year of studies;
- the number of contact hours has been increased in many study courses;
- the study programme has been updated by attracting several foreign visiting lecturers, including Tyrone Shaw (USA), Øyvind Økland (Norway);
- field professionals from public and commercial media, TV and radio are invited to the study course “Student Media” and to other courses in order to introduce the greatly shifting media environment and topicalities therein.
- a compulsory component of the study course “Investigative Journalism” is participation in the creation of journal “Inquisitio” so that students would better acquire practical journalism skills. It is the only printed edition of investigative journalism in Latvia. Publishing of an issue usually takes place in April and is celebrated in the form of special events at the National Library of Latvia.

Increasing importance is ascribed to digitalisation among teaching methods used in the previous academic year both by digitally evaluating the submitted work and making broader use of the opportunities offered by e-studies. It allows working with students and lecturers more conveniently; moreover, e-studies offer the opportunity to verify whether the submitted paper has been plagiarised and to avoid such cases.

New lecturers have been attracted to some study courses, including doctoral students from the RSU Faculty of Communication, thereby ensuring succession and at the same time introducing students with the latest research results.

Students can be involved in scientific activity by participating in students’ scientific groups in different fields, conferences, or seminars in Latvia or abroad; help conducting research paper by participating in an RSU scientific conference after submitting an application to an RSU doctoral student on the Student Portal; by presenting one’s research paper at the RSU International student conference.

2.2. Assessment of the interrelation between the information included in the study courses/ modules, the intended learning outcomes, the set aims and other indicators, the relation between the aims of the study course/ module and the aims and intended

outcomes of the study programme. In case of a doctoral study programme, provide a description of the main research roadmaps and the impact of the study programme on research and other education levels.

As already mentioned, mapping of the study programme and study courses has been conducted which allows ascertaining that the study programme and study courses comply with EQF/LQF level 6 and requirements set out in the regulatory enactments. Learning outcomes of the study courses are usually mutually consistent and coherent. The principal forms of studies are lectures, seminars, individual work of students, practical classes, creative tasks and projects, and placement in mass media editorials. Some classes take place in the studios of Latvian Radio (*Latvijas Radio*) and Latvian Television (*Latvijas Televīzija*); thereby allowing students to study in an actual media work environment.

Special attention is devoted to students' independent work. Essential components of studies are analysis of literature and summary or essay writing for each seminar, preparation of reports, individual projects, practical creative work, semester papers. Study methods are aimed at independent, analytical, and critical thinking, and conducting regular practical tasks and acquiring research activity skills. The principal study methods in the programme are mass media content analysis, preparation of independent assignments (reports and summaries), preparation and presentation of individual and group projects, learning practices, conducting study research, conducting practical and creative work in journalism. In some study courses ("News Journalism", "Methods and Genres of Journalism", "Editorship", "Investigative Journalism", "Sports Journalism", "Photo Journalism"), students can develop their practical assignments not only in writing but also in the format of a photograph, audio, or video; thereby increasing the proportion of creative elements in the study process and using technical means available at RSU. Students can use the studio of students' internet media "Runā skaļāk!" which is equipped with modern technologies, video and sound software – laptops, microphones, sound processing and editing panel. A task that is suitable for media content creation has been included in each practical course.

As a result of introducing the e-studies environment, the issue of the availability of learning materials has been solved. E-studies offer the opportunities of not only ensuring students with learning materials but also with additional literature, online tests, submission of students' assignments and communication opportunities. Each student has an e-mail for effective communication and common delivery of information in which the information sent is available for all students of a particular year of studies and programme.

Since the curriculum is implemented in the form of a module system and the number of students is relatively small, the organisation of modules during the semester each year creates a different kind of interaction and dynamics. The task of the management of the study programme is to follow the interaction and succession of the module plan content while making the best use of human and financial resources whenever possible.

Overall, the programme is arranged so that general study courses would be initially mastered ("Introduction to Journalism", "History of Ideas", "History of Communication"), after that – specialised theoretical courses ("Media Criticism and Analysis", "Mass Communication Theories"), and specialised study courses ("Radio Journalism", "Sports Journalism", "Editorship").

Overall, the study programme offers substantiated theoretical and practical study courses that are consecutive and gradually increase knowledge and skills, improve competence in communication theory and media work, in conducting research in communication, and in understanding public and

cultural processes. The programme prepares for work in specific fields of journalism and different professional fields related to media. Study programme's courses have been created successively, taking into account the necessity for working under changing and unclear circumstances, and self-development in accordance with the formulation included in the EQF.

2.3. Assessment of the study implementation methods (including the evaluation methods) by providing the analysis of how the study implementation methods (including the evaluation methods) used in the study courses/ modules are selected, what they are, and how they contribute to the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study courses and the aims of the study programme. Provide an explanation of how the student-centred principles are taken into account in the implementation of the study process.

The study programme has until now been implemented only as a full-time study programme in Latvian. In the future, the opportunity of extending the possibilities for the implementation of the study programme and also attracting part-time and foreign students will be considered. The plan for part-time studies is attached in Annex 19. For foreign students, the only difference would be that the "Speech Communication" would be replaced by the study course "Latvian Language for Foreign Students" in Part A. The course to be replaced may be subject to change at the time of implementation in English.

The study process is implemented mostly as interactive lectures, practical interactive classes or seminars and independent work of students. Both during lectures and classes the aforementioned advanced technologies available at RSU are used.

During their studies at RSU, students have a possibility to ask questions they are interested in, discuss it with the lecturer and study colleagues. Problem-centred teaching strategies are used in studies. All additional study materials are freely available to the students in the e-studies environment. It also provides references to additional information sources for studying the specific issues, as well as materials for self-guided learning (for example, practical assignments that can be done at home with self-assessment algorithm).

Both formative and summative evaluation is used in studies. The formative evaluation takes place during everyday study process: by asking control questions to the students during the contact lessons, as well as by discussing the independent work of students that is practised during the study process. The summative evaluation takes place at the conclusion of each study course as a test or examination. The summative evaluation tests are organised in a written form (in paper format or electronically) or as oral discussions. At the conclusion of studies, the student selects a topic he or she is interested in and in cooperation with one's selected paper supervisor develops and defends the Bachelor's thesis.

As already mentioned, by the end of each academic year, students are asked to complete the evaluation survey in RSU e-environment, wherein they can express their opinion and provide proposals both regarding the content of the study course and the methods of implementation thereof, as well as competences and work style of the lecturers. Therefore, study courses are updated each year in accordance with the evaluation given by the students. Representatives of the students are also involved in faculty councils ensuring representation of their opinion in decision-making.

RSU exercises a student-centred education, providing that:

- independently learning student is at the centre of the study process;
- learning outcomes are clearly formulated and known, and the student studies to achieve them;
- students know and understand the learning outcomes defined for the study programme or course;
- evaluation of the student's achievements is formed in a way that it is possible to ensure whether and at what level the planned learning outcomes have been achieved;
- the task of the teaching staff is to facilitate the studies of the student so that the student would achieve the set learning outcomes;
- it can be observed that the aggregate of outcomes of separate study courses forms the learning outcomes of the study programme.

Learning outcomes of the study programme are formulated in a student-centred way and they:

- establish a unified understanding for students and teaching staff regarding what is expected from the student at the end of the course or the programme;
- provide students with an opportunity to study more effectively, i.e., students clearly know what knowledge and skills they will obtain when they successfully complete the respective course. The students can also track what they have already learned and what they still have not learned, and what their progress is towards achieving the outcomes of the programme;
- present a tool for the teaching staff for organising the study process more effectively: lectures, seminars, group work, discussions, laboratory work, etc., by selecting topics and materials, as well as teaching strategies in accordance with the learning outcomes specified for the study course or study programme;
- create a mutual understanding between the teaching staff and colleagues regarding the achievement of which learning outcome the course is taken, and the respective learning method is selected;
- identify those areas where certain types of learning outcomes overlap or lack (by comparing courses and compliance thereof with the programme);
- aid the students in their choice on which courses to take in accordance with learning outcomes the student wishes to achieve;
- provide clear information for employers on knowledge and skills the students have obtained, as well as provide an opportunity to assess this knowledge and skills in accordance with the defined professional qualification.

The study implementation and assessment methods promote the achievement of learning outcomes and aims of the study programme. In addition to principal forms of studies (lectures, seminars, independent work of students, practical classes), teaching methods, which bring students closer to the media environment and various forms and methods of journalism – field trips, guest lectures of acknowledged persons from the press, TV, radio and digital media journalists and editors, are used in studies. Some lectures take place, for example, in the European Union House where students acquire skills needed in press conferences and later present the acquired information in the study course “Students’ Media”.

Students are also involved as volunteers in different events; for example, in focus groups of elections of the Saeima of the Republic of Latvia in the autumn of 2018 – during the election day, students interviewed the electorate regarding their choice, aggregating and delivering information to news agency LETA.

Study process and study course descriptions in full-time (FT) and part-time (PT) study forms are in line with Section 1(8) of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (1 CP corresponds to 40

academic hours of work (one week of studies)). Paragraph 9 of the Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No. 240 "Regulations on the National Standard of Academic Education" provides that contact hours make up no less than 40% of a Bachelor's study programme in full-time studies (except for the amount intended for placement and writing of the Bachelor's thesis). **In FT planning, the amount of contact hours makes 40% of the study programme.** In addition to contact hours in the form of lectures and seminars, in order to implement the aims, objectives of the study programme and the planned innovative solution for creation of skills, knowledge and competences, solutions for their transfer and co-working, several formats of contact hours are implemented in each study course, including individual consultations, visiting lectures, study visits, semester project management, participation in RSU Research Week and other wider public scientific and research events – conferences, seminars, discussions. Students contemplate on the ideas learned during these study activities outside lectures and seminars in home assignments and independent work. Individual consultations in each study course after each covered topic promote individual approach with regard to each student and with regard to profound understanding of the content of the study programme on journalism.

The amount of contact hours of **individual consultations** depends on the diversity and level of complexity of topics of study courses in the respective semester. During them, lecturers of the study course discuss with the student in detail aspects of the topic covered in the study course, the content and methods of fulfilment of independent work – individual studies, reading, essays, creative journalism works, home assignments and other elements of independent studies. In this way, lecturers ensure more active involvement and higher motivation of students to participate in the research of journalism and communication problems and in discussion, implementation of solutions. Individual consultations are organised immediately after the class in an auditorium (lecture or seminar) or department, upon individual agreement, or, taking into account experience, also by phone and e-mail, contacting about different matters related to the course content and individual studies.

Also, in addition to lectures and seminars, several **visiting lectures** are implemented in each semester, on which there are agreements with industry representatives – employees of different printed and digital media companies, publishing houses, radio and TV.

In the study process there are regular study visits to different media companies to see in person the work of press, radio, TV and digital media, the specifics and latest developments in daily work of an editorial office.

16 contact hours (20 contact hours in semester 4) are also planned for participation of students in the RSU Research Week every year and in other broader **public science and research events – conferences, seminars, discussions**. Participation of students in the RSU Research Week includes plenary sessions of the research week and attendance of parallel sessions, as well as increasingly more frequent preparation of a publication and presentation to speak at the conference. After attendance of sessions, students contemplate on the obtained knowledge in home assignments and independent work, reflecting the latest scientific and practical developments in trends of the communication industry. The students, who participate in the conference with a report, receive specific advisory support from lecturers in the preparation of an abstract, article and presentation for the conference.

In addition to lectures, classes and individual consultations, for the achievement of the aim and the implementation of objectives in study courses lecturers will provide scientific, methodological and practical **semester project management support** – eight to twelve contact hours per semester, on average.

For more detailed planned distribution of contact hours see the tables below.

Total amount of contact hours

Semester	Credit points				CH per CP A	CH per CP B	CH per CP total
	A	B	C	Total			
1.	16	8	0	20	41 %	48 %	42 %
2.	16	8	0	20	38 %	48 %	40 %
3.	12	8	2	20	51 %	30 %	42 %
4.	10	12	0	20	63 %	26 %	40 %
5.	4	18	0	20	68 %	31 %	40 %
6.	20	0	0	20	—	—	—
Total:	78	40	2	120	48 %	35 %	42 %

Additional contact hours

Additional contact hours A		
Learning activities	Semester	Contact hours
Individual consultations	1	48
Individual consultations	2	46
Individual consultations	3	26
Individual consultations	4	48
Individual consultations	6	12
RSU Research Week and other public scientific events	2	16
RSU Research Week and other public scientific events	4	20
RSU Research Week and other public scientific events	6	16
Visiting lectures	1	16
Visiting lectures	2	12
Visiting lectures	3	20

Visiting lectures	4	24
Visiting lectures	5	12
Visiting lectures	6	10
Study visits	1	10
Study visits	2	16
Study visits	3	16
Study visits	4	20
Study visits	5	16
Study visits	6	4
Semester project (management)	1	8
Semester project (management)	2	10
Semester project (management)	3	12
Semester project (management)	4	12
Semester project (management)	5	12
Additional contact hours B		
Learning activities	Semester	Contact hours
Individual consultations per CP	3	2.00
Individual consultations per CP	4	1.67

2.4. If the study programme entails a traineeship, provide the analysis and assessment of the relation between the tasks of the traineeship included in the study programme and the learning outcomes of the study programme. Specify how the higher education institution/ college supports the students within the study programme regarding the fulfilment of the tasks set for students during the traineeship.

The study programme prescribes two placements (in January and July of the second year of studies); the total volume of study placement is 8 CP (4 CP per semester).

Documents of the study placement include: the study contract, student's placement diary,

evaluation of the head of placement, student's self-assessment on what has been acquired during the placement and the usefulness of what has been acquired in the study process with regard to the placement. It allows assessing student's placement results and cooperation with the placement supervisor in order to achieve beneficial and the most efficient cooperation for both parties.

The placement is ensured for 100 % of students in the study programme.

The placement takes place in Latvia's public media (LTV, Latvijas Radio, LSM), news agency LETA, newspapers "Neatkarīgā" and "Latvijas Avīze", JSC "Diena", LLC "Dienas Žurnāli", LLC "Cits Medijs", publishing house "SANTA", as well as in major news portals – *Delfi*, *TVNet*.

See Annex 9.1 "Description of the organisation of students' placement".

See Annex 9.2 containing information on agreements and other confirmations on the provision of students' placement in enterprises.

2.5. Analysis and assessment of the topics of the final theses of the students, their relevance in the respective field, including the labour market, and the evaluations of the final theses.

Students develop their final papers on topicalities in communication, issues in media and journalism. Students choose topics for research either by themselves or together with the paper supervisor. Bachelor's theses are often conducted based on the developed final papers in the first or second year of studies by expanding the field of research and thematic range.

Final papers attest to students' understanding of communication science, its principal theories, concepts, notions in mass communication theories, media audiences. They also demonstrate the skill to critically evaluate reality, react to it, and to reflect in accordance with the acquired theoretical knowledge and professional skills from perspectives of professional criteria of journalism, to demonstrate the acquired knowledge on research methods, skills to use it in research of professional environment and to analyse research data, the ability to make decisions when designing and implementing social science research.

Each year, at least 20 % of students develop creative final papers, thus demonstrating their growth during studies and confirming readiness to work in the chosen field. In addition to the theoretical part of the creative Final paper, a series of articles, audio or video recordings or their episode, which in terms of content and format is intended for a particular media, have been created. Sometimes, the project of a new medium that has been developed in detail and that would be topical in the existing media market is offered in the creative paper. Articles, interviews and episodes created as part of creative Final papers are often intended for publishing; for example, in the study course "Student Media", whereas creative part of Bachelor's theses is already published in specific media; for example, a series of articles on maturity aspects of youths when entering adulthood (in the journal "I'mperfekt") and a series of articles on psychological portraits of characters from films and books devoted to Latvia's Centenary (in the journal "Annas Psihologija"), as well as used in the broadcasts of the Latvian Radio.

The quality of final papers attests to the fact that learning outcomes are achieved because:

- students are able to select the necessary theoretical material for the topic of their research and are able to select a corresponding research method or format for the creative paper;
- students can develop a creative product – a series of articles, documentary film or media

format;

- students can use research methods and know how to acquire necessary data;
- students can develop in detail a project of creative paper, to aggregate research data, and to discuss research results;
- students can use and adapt learning outcomes.

Results and studies of final papers are used when participating in scientific conferences; for example, when preparing Bachelor's theses in 2019, all third year students presented their reports in the RSU interdisciplinary social science conference "Places".

Overall, students' research papers have been developed in adequate quality, mostly receiving evaluation ranging from 7 to 10. Only a few percent of students cannot defend their research papers and receive a satisfactory mark. The topics comply with the topical framework of communication science and dynamic changes in the media environment. Many modern topics in the field are raised; for example, constructive journalism, new format media (bookazines), the impact of social media, as well as topics in society at large – migration issues, gender equality and feminism, social integration.

Annex 17.1 contains a table on the compliance of the study programme with the State education standard.

Annex 18.1 contains mapping of study courses for the achievement of learning outcomes of the study programme.

Annex 19 contains the plan of the study programme (for each type and form of implementation of the study programme).

Annex 20 contains descriptions of the study courses of the study programme.

2.6. Analysis and assessment of the outcomes of the surveys conducted among the students, graduates, and employers, and the use of these outcomes for the improvement of the content and quality of studies by providing the respective examples.

Students have an opportunity to put forward proposals on a regular basis by the means of surveys for the improvement of the study process, improvement of study course content and its implementation. Surveying students at the end of study courses is organised in accordance with the established RSU procedure.

Students fill in the study course evaluation survey on each study course in the e-studies where they can express their opinion and recommendations on the study course content, its implementation methods, lecturer's competences and the style of work; at the conclusion of studies, they assess the study programme in general by filling in the survey on the study programme.

Once a year, data analysis of the study course survey and data analysis of the study programme survey is performed. Therefore, study courses are updated each year in accordance with the evaluation given by the students. Representatives of the students are also involved in faculty councils ensuring representation of their opinion in decision-making.

Twice a year (within two weeks after closing the survey) academic staff and the heads of academic structural units can publish the feedback to the students regarding results of surveys and decisions made for the improvement of study courses. Feedback can be published as soon as the survey has

been closed. Survey section has restricted access, by default the rights are granted to the academic staff, heads of departments and those who have been granted the right to the course. In the published feedback, students can see survey statistics and feedback published by the academic staff or head of the academic structural unit.

In April 2018, the feedback was given on survey results from 34 % of study courses of autumn 2017. Based on students' evaluations and recommendations, the study course "Student Media" was improved, whereas the study course "Sports Journalism" was renewed, and as of academic year 2019/2020 the study course "Stylistics and Editing" will recommence.

The feedback function gives an opportunity for academic staff to respond to evaluation surveys of the study courses, and the students can find out the further use of their feedback. The students can familiarise themselves with the feedback on Student Portal where they can see the feedback for the previous semester. The head of the study programme motivates the students to fill in the surveys.

Overall, graduates are satisfied with the study programme, mostly emphasising the high quality of its content and criticising organisation of study process – rooms, curriculum.

Graduates and students indicate that practical tasks and strengthening of their skills must be stimulated during study courses. Realising the importance of this issue, the number of practical tasks has been increased in all study programmes and compulsory B part study course "Student Media" has been introduced. Students also want more organised and comprehensive indications and developed rules for conducting course papers, placement reports, as well as Final papers.

The curriculum remains controversial among graduates and students. A part of students is satisfied that not all working days are used and that studies can be combined with work, while others believe that thereby some days are overloaded. This is a longstanding issue which is advanced by the fact that there are no adequate rooms for RSU social science studies. The issue has been raised at the RSU administration; however, this issue could be conceptually solved by constructing the RSU House of Social Sciences. Students emphasise that the availability of better lecturers and regular consultations need to be ensured, particularly referring to lecturers whose main workplace is not RSU.

There have not been conducted surveys of professional employers in the field of media and communication; however, the administration and lecturers of the study programme regularly discuss educational and work environment issues with employers. Regular cooperation (guest lectures, placement, research, expert reports, self-promotional activities) with many partners of the professional media environment and with professional organisations takes place during the implementation of the study programme. Many lecturers represent employers or are employed in journalism or media management, as a result of which they, on the one hand, share their knowledge and, on the other hand, inform others about the reality of the labour market. The head of the study programme Anna Peipiņa represents employers and works in practical journalism – publishing house "SANTA" and is also a board member of the Baltic Centre for Media Excellence and participates in the Latvian Media Ethics Council. It allows emphasizing topicalities in the labour market and holding on to the principles of media quality and ethics in the study process.

Overall, employers positively evaluate students' knowledge and skills; part of the criticism is directed towards students' motivation to work continuously and independently and towards gaining experience. However, employers and students understand that placement is not the summary of studies but instead it is part of studies, since during this time a part of skills is improved.

2.7. Provide the assessment of the options of the incoming and outgoing mobility of the

students, the dynamics of the number of the used opportunities, and the recognition of the study courses acquired during the mobility.

The Erasmus + programme mobility activity has been implemented among the countries of the programme.

Students of the study programme have a chance to participate in exchange studies or international placement for one semester abroad, receiving Erasmus+ scholarship. The necessary number of credit points to be obtained is 30 ECTS points or 20 Latvian credit points for one semester. Journalism students mainly study in institutions of higher education in the Czech Republic, Denmark, Greece, Estonia, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Spain, Germany and Norway within the frame of Erasmus+ exchange programme. The student needs to have a good command of English, French, or of other EU foreign language in order to successfully study within the frame of Erasmus+ exchange programme.

The partner universities are selected on the basis of information available on equivalent study programmes and the language of instruction. One of the main conditions is the coordination of study courses during the student exchange programme so that the courses can be recognized and added to RSU Diploma Supplement. As a result, a full study process is provided, complemented by experience from abroad.

Since the courses learned in foreign universities in most cases differ in content and scope from those of the Bachelor's degree study programme "Journalism" at RSU Faculty of Communication, the programme management carefully evaluates the content and scope of each study course learned in a foreign university; and a list of courses to be learned within the mobility is being compiled so that the learning outcomes of the study courses learned in a foreign university would be comparable to the learning outcomes of the courses to be completed within RSU programme. In accordance with the procedure established by RSU, the acquisition of study courses outside the study programme is recognized by drawing up a recognition protocol. For example, if a student studies the study programme "Journalism" at Ghent University (Belgium) within the Erasmus + programme, the courses "Media Culture and Diversity", "Interactive Media", "History of Media" and others studied at Ghent University are recognised.

One of the main conditions is the alignment of the study courses during the student exchange programme in order to be able to recognise study courses and add them to the diploma supplement of the respective RSU study programme.

In academic year 2018/2019, two second-year students from the study programme "Journalism" used this opportunity. See Annex 8.1./8.2.

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme)

3.1. Assessment of the compliance of the resources and provision (study provision, scientific support (if applicable), informative provision (including libraries), material and technical provision, and financial provision) with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the learning outcomes to be achieved by providing the

respective examples. Whilst carrying out the assessment, it is possible to refer to the information provided for in the criteria set forth in Part II, Chapter 3, sub-paragraphs 3.1 to 3.3.

RSU students and academic staff are provided with a well-developed IT infrastructure and virtual study environment. Training rooms are equipped with the necessary on-site support for recording of video lectures, online lectures and lectures held in rooms with sophisticated multimedia equipment.

The Faculty of Communication has created students' internet media "Runā skaļāk!" which is equipped with modern technologies, video and sound software – laptops, microphones, sound processing, and editing panel. A task that involves media content creation has been included in each practical course. The studio also contains video cameras and microphones for making video recordings, a radio studio, video editing studio, photo studio, computers, photo and video cameras, stands, lights, suitable software.

As a result of introducing the e-studies environment, the issue of the availability of learning materials has been solved. E-studies offer the opportunities of not only ensuring students with learning materials but also with additional literature, online tests, submission of students' assignments and communication opportunities.

Each study year has an e-mail for effective communication and common delivery of information in which the information sent is available for all students of a particular year of studies and programme.

The RSU library offers necessary books, e-books, journals, academic research and literature databases that are regularly updated for the purposes of the study programme.

Libraries of Latvia are joined in a single network; students of the study programme may use any Latvia's or other EU country's library or database resources. The list of RSU library resources, including e-books and academic databases, is available on the RSU [website](#).

The subscribed databases are available to the students of the programme also from home, after authorising with the given RSU username and password on the Student Portal.

In the study programme "Journalism", the study process is organized in the form of lectures and classes. The learning of the study programme is individualised; it takes place in small groups (7-12 students), thus providing students with the opportunity to ask questions of their interest and to learn the study programme in a more effective way (both for students and the teaching staff). It allows for individual assignments and creative work, including the practical work by groups that is presented in the class thus students can practise both presentation skills and public speaking skills needed for young journalists. With each new year of study, the number of students enrolled is increased, but the emphasis is on the quality of the study process. The main goal of RSU is to provide high quality studies for the new students and prospective professionals, and the optimal study base for studies has been calculated accordingly.

3.2. Assessment of the study provision and scientific support, including the resources provided within the cooperation with other science institutes and institutions of higher education (applicable to the doctoral study programmes).

Not applicable.

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (4. Teaching Staff)

4.1. Analysis and assessment of the changes to the composition of the teaching staff over the reporting period and their impact on the study quality.

Academic staff with relevant academic qualification and competence in the sector are involved in the provision of the study process. Practically all academic staff members represent the employer institutions of the sector, promoting cohesion of theory and practice, thus facilitating the implementation of aims of the study programme and learning outcomes.

34 lecturers are involved in the implementation of the study programme: 3 of them are professors, 3 associate professors, 1 acting associate professor, 5 assistant professors, 5 lecturers and 14 visiting lecturers. 15 lecturers are regular full-time lecturers at RSU (45%). 6 experts approved by the Latvian Council of Science (4 in social sciences – media and communication, 1 in social sciences – psychology and 1 in social sciences – sociology and social work) are involved in the implementation of the study programme.

At the beginning of the academic year 2014/2015, 26 lecturers were involved in the implementation of the study programme, 2 of them were professors and 4 associate professors, 1 assistant professor, 5 lecturers, and 14 visiting lecturers. 13 lecturers were regular full-time teaching staff at RSU (50%) .

Changes in the composition of the teaching staff are related both to the inclusion of new restricted elective courses in the study programme and to the aim of strengthening the interaction between students and the professionals of the sector.

The pedagogic workload of lecturers involved in the implementation of the study programme is designed in accordance with the curriculum of each academic year and study semester. Study courses can be organised in the form of modules, and the workload is reviewed in accordance with necessity and provisions of regulatory enactments. RSU promotes a balanced workload for lecturers, as well as advances a healthy lifestyle in order to reduce and prevent the risk of burnout in the teaching staff.

Academic and research activity at RSU is conducted by recognised and highly-valued permanent employees who have been elected in their academic positions. In order to ensure good knowledge and skills appreciated in the labour market, alongside permanent academic staff, RSU also attracts academic staff performing their duties for a certain time. Among them are experts of the industry, academic staff members elected in other institutions of higher education, etc.

Results of scientific activities of the academic staff are aggregated once a year by including them in the scientific activity report, as well as for some groups of the staff they are related to the principles of remuneration and motivation. The achievements of lecturers are included in their CVs (see Annex 6.2.).

Lecturers constantly conduct individual studies, regularly attend international conferences and develop publications for academic journals. On average, there are two to three publications a year

per one lecturer of the study programme who is a permanent employee of RSU.

The study programme employs lecturers whose education and experience complies with the requirements of the Law on the Institutions of Higher Education; different professionals and foreign lecturers related to the field of communication are involved in teaching the study courses.

Overall, the composition of lecturers of study courses is stable; however, visiting lecturers and field professionals are regularly attracted in order to achieve compliance of a study course with topicalities in the labour market. The study course "News Journalism" is conducted by news producer Māra Matisone at the "Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze"; Orests Silabriedis (Latvian Radio), Gunta Gaidamaviča (LTV) are invited for the implementation of the study course "Cultural Journalism", study course "Editorship" is taught by Anna Peipiņa (editor in publishing house "SANTA"), and the study course "Sports Journalism" is partly conducted by Ingmārs Jurisons ("Sporta Avīze").

4.2. Assessment of the compliance of the qualification of the teaching staff members (academic staff members, visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers, and visiting assistants) involved in the implementation of the study programme with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the provisions set out in the respective regulatory enactments. Provide information on how the qualification of the teaching staff members contributes to the achievement of the learning outcomes.

Qualification and competences of the academic staff are constantly improved by ensuring the growth of educational skills, improvement of English and professional training of the sector. Knowledge of the official language of the academic staff fully complies with the Cabinet Regulations No. 733 of 7 July 2008 "On the Amount of the Knowledge of the Official Language and the Procedures for Examination of the Knowledge of the Official Language for the Performance of Professional Duties and Duties of Office, Receipt of the Permanent Residence Permit and Obtaining of the Status of a Long-term Resident of the European Union and the State Fee for Examination of the Fluency in the Official Language".

The qualification of academic staff involved in the implementation of the study programme "Journalism" complies with the aims and tasks of the study programme. Those are professors, associate professors, assistant professors, lecturers, and assistants holding a doctoral or Master's degree, as well as additionally attracted lecturers and visiting lecturers – field professionals with a corresponding longstanding experience. Special attention is devoted to the issues of succession and interaction of intergenerational teaching staff. In order to improve the content of the study programme, as well as to introduce innovative methods in study processes, RSU involves foreign visiting academic staff.

Owing to the field professionals involved in the study programme, students can acquire the competences which are necessary for media work, and accordingly after graduation they can independently prepare news reports, coverage, interviews, broadcasts, and are ready for the labour market.

The head of the study programme ensures compliance of the content of the study programme with internal and external laws and regulations, requirements of the labour market, sectoral development trends and needs of students, analyses data that might provide information on factors affecting results and quality of the study programmes and implements necessary improvements to

the study programmes.

Students are also involved in research projects managed by the lecturers; for instance, in RSU Department of Communication Studies, research on the portrayal of migration in Latvia's media (authors of the research project – lecturers of the RSU Department of Communication Studies Sergejs Kruks, Anda Rožukalne, Ilva Skulte, Agita Lūse, and Alnis Stakle) in which overall 860 publications devoted to migration were studied.

All teaching staff involved in the study programme as lecturers or visiting lecturers have at least a Master's degree in the related science sector (see Annex 24.7 regarding the analysis of the composition of the academic staff involved in the implementation of the study programme). Most of the lecturers are professionals of their sector (e.g. Alice Sņegireva (information agency LETA), Anna Peipina (publishing company “Žurnāls SANTA), Gunda Gaidamaviča, Zane Volkinšteine (Latvian TV)).

See Annex 6.1: Basic information about the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study direction and their language skills.

See Annex 6.4: A list of publications of the teaching staff during the reporting period.

See Annex 6.5: A summary of publications of the teaching staff involved in the study direction, their participation in conferences and projects and experience in the sector.

Forms of attracting potential students are constantly being improved by providing widely available information about the programme. As one of the plans is to offer studies in English. At present, it is partly possible to learn some study courses in English, such as “Introduction to Communication Theories”. Although these courses are currently being implemented under the Erasmus + exchange programmes, it is planned to increase the number of courses offered annually so that in the future the programme can also be implemented in English.

In order to make sure of the foreign language skills of the teaching staff implementing study programmes in English, RSU periodically organises a detailed English language proficiency test and, if necessary, additional training. If the study programme is implemented in English, lecturers with at least B2 English knowledge will be involved. See Annex 24.5 for a statement from RSU that the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programmes within the study direction, which is fully or in part implemented in English, have the English proficiency at least at level B2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

Outgoing mobility of the RSU academic staff is implemented within the framework of Erasmus+ programme. Before leaving for a teaching mobility, the member of the academic staff contacts the receiving institution of higher education in order to develop the lecture plan of suitable content. The main condition of the guest teaching visit of Erasmus+: the lecturer must provide at least eight academic hours which can be both lectures and seminars. Guest lectures must be conducted in accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Ingoing mobility of the teaching staff is implemented within the framework of project activities of Erasmus+ programme. Prior to receiving the visiting teaching staff, the content of lectures and study cycle of students is coordinated (Bachelor's, Master's or doctoral students) in order to ensure full attendance of lectures and added value to the current study course.

4.3. Information on the number of the scientific publications of the academic staff members, involved in the implementation of the doctoral study programme, as published during the reporting period by listing the most significant publications published in

Scopus or WoS CC indexed journals. As for the social sciences, humanitarian sciences, and the science of art, the scientific publications published in ERIH+ indexed journals may be additionally specified (if applicable).

Not applicable.

4.4. Information on the participation of the academic staff, involved in the implementation of the doctoral study programme, in scientific projects as project managers or prime contractors/ subproject managers/ leading researchers by specifying the name of the relevant project, as well as the source and the amount of the funding. Provide information on the reporting period (if applicable).

Not applicable.

4.5. Provide examples of the involvement of the academic staff in the scientific research and/or artistic creation activities both at national and at international level (in the fields related to the content of the study programme), as well as the use of the obtained information in the study process.

Participation in research activities is mandatory for the RSU full-time lecturers, as stated in the employees' job descriptions. Results of scientific activities of the academic staff are aggregated once a year by including them in the scientific activity report, as well as for some groups of the staff they are related to the principles of remuneration and motivation. The achievements of lecturers are included in their CVs (see Annex X).

Lecturers constantly conduct individual studies, regularly attend international conferences and develop publications for academic journals. On average, there are two to three publications a year per one lecturer of the study programme who is a permanent employee of RSU.

Cooperation in studies, research, and projects takes place with the following institutions of higher education: Tallinn University, Aristotle University in Greece, University of Akureyri in Iceland, University of Helsinki, University of Jyväskylä in Finland, Vilnius University, Kaunas University, University of Tartu, Latvian Academy of Culture, Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences, Rezekne Academy of Technologies, Daugavpils University, Södertörn University in Stockholm.

Lecturers Anda Rožukalne, Ilva Skulte, Klāvs Sedlenieks, and Deniss Hanovs of the study programme took an active part in the RSU interdisciplinary social science conference "Places" held in April 2019.

Many lecturers of the study programme (Sergejs Kruks, Anda Rožukalne, Klāvs Sedlenieks, Ilva Skulte) are co-authors to *Pluralism Anxiety, Acting Socially in Latvia* (RSU, 2018).

Management of the study programme continues working towards inviting visiting lecturers. Many foreign lecturers have been invited; for example, Paivi Maijanena-Kilaheiko (Finland) and Tyrone

Shaw (USA). In 2018, Øyvind Økland taught guest lectures “Media and Globalisation, Media and Migration” as part of many study courses.

Partner institutions of higher education are informed about Erasmus exchange possibilities at RSU on a regular basis, including the field of exchange of visiting teaching staff. In addition to electronic communication, each year RSU ID organises Erasmus+ International Week, the programme of which includes several professional networking events. Establishing contacts with new Erasmus+ cooperation partners takes place within their framework. Development of existing cooperation and internationalisation complies with aims and developmental plan of study directions and overall can be treated as sufficient.

See Annex 6.4 “List of publications of the teaching staff for the reported period”.

4.6. Assessment of the cooperation between the teaching staff members by specifying the mechanisms used to promote the cooperation and ensure the interrelation between the study courses/ modules. Specify also the proportion of the number of the students and the teaching staff within the study programme (at the moment of the submission of the Self-Assessment Report).

Close attention is devoted to mutual cooperation among the teaching staff and the interconnection of study courses in the organisation of study programme. Owing to the system of modules, this cooperation can be designed flexibly. In many study courses (“Introduction to Journalism”, “Cultural Journalism”, “News Journalism”), academic essays or creative works developed by students are used in the study course “Student Media”, whereas essays that were created as part of Students’ International Conference were evaluated in study course “Social Anthropology”. After the heads of several study programmes came to an agreement, changes were made to the mastering of languages in all study programmes of the study direction. As of academic year 2019/2020, students will no longer be offered a separate English language course, instead, they will have a language of choice (French, Spanish, or Russian) the basics of which will be mastered in the course of two semesters. Taking into consideration problems with the quality of the Latvian language in public and commercial media, study course “Stylistics and Editing” has been renewed.

Development of media environment (VR, AR technologies, 360-degree video, the Internet of Things, the necessity for increasing the level of media literacy) suggests development and improvement of the content of the study programme primarily in three directions:

- 1) communication and media psychology, cognitive science and neuroscience;
- 2) media literacy in digital information, network, and hybrid communication environment;
- 3) discourse analysis in different fields of public life. A closer cooperation would be needed here with other RSU structural units that in the context of university’s strategy work in fields like neuroscience or cognitive or experimental psychology.

When calculating the total number of lecturers, as indicated in the accreditation documents of the academic Bachelor’s study programme “Journalism”, the total number of lecturers involved in the implementation of the programme is 34, while the total number of students was 43 on 3 October 2019, so the ratio of students and lecturers is 1.26. It should be noted that part of the study courses is taught together for students of several bachelor's study programmes, thereby sharing resources. The joint implementation of study courses strengthens the financial cost-effectiveness of study

programmes and supports interdisciplinary cooperation between students.

For more information see the description of the study direction II 3.4., 3.5., 3.6.

Annexes

III. Description of the Study Programme - 1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme		
Compliance of the joint study programme with the provisions of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (table)		
Statistics on the students over the reporting period	16_pielik_ZR_Statistika_eng.pdf	16_pielik_ZR_Statistika_lv.pdf
III. Description of the Study Programme - 2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof		
Compliance of the study programme with the State Education Standard	17.1_pielik_Atbalst_lzgl_Stand_eng.pdf	17.1_pielik_Atbalst_lzgl_stand_lv.pdf
Compliance of the qualification to be acquired upon completion of the study programme with the professional standard (if applicable)		
Compliance of the study programme with the specific regulatory framework applicable to the relevant field (if applicable)		
Mapping of the study courses/ modules for the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study programme	18.1_pielik_StK_StR_kartejums_eng.pdf	18.1_pielik_StK_StRt_kartejums_lv.pdf
Curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme)	19_pielik_ZR_planojums_ENG.pdf	19_pielik_ZR_planojums_LV.pdf
Descriptions of the study courses/ modules	20-1_pielik_Studiju_kursu_apraksti_ZR_ENG.pdf	20-1_pielik_Studiju_kursu_apraksti_ZR_LV.pdf
Description of the Study Direction - Other mandatory attachments		
Sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme.	24-1_ABSP_ZR_diploms_gatavs_ENG.pdf	24-1_ABSP_ZR_diploms_gatavs.pdf
Description of the Study Programme - Other mandatory attachments		
Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college will provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme or at another higher education institution/ college (a contract with another accredited higher education institution/ college), in case the implementation of the study programme is discontinued	24.2_pielikums_Apliecinajums_par_citu_StP_IKZ_parakstits_tulk.pdf	24.2_pielikums_Apliecinajums_par_citu_StP_IKZ_parakstits.pdf
Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college guarantees to the students a compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the higher education institution/ college (actions or failure to act) and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme	24.3_pielikums_Apliecinajums_par_zaudejumiem_IKZ_parakstits_eng.pdf	24.3_pielikums_Apliecinajums_par_zaudejumiem_IKZ_parakstits.pdf
Confirmation of the higher education institution/ college that the teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language according to European language levels (see the levels under www.europass.lv), if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language.	24.5_pielik_Apliecin_anglu_val_StV_IKZ_parakstits_eng.pdf	24.5_pielik_Apliecin_anglu_val_StV_IKZ_parakstits.pdf
If the study programmes in the study direction subject to the assessment are doctoral study programmes, a confirmation that at least five teaching staff members with doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field or sub-field of science, in which the study programme has intended to award a scientific degree.		
If academic study programmes are implemented within the study direction, a document confirming that the academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the provisions set out in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause three of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education	24-7_pielik_apliecinajums_ABSP_ZR_eng.pdf	24-7_pielik_apliecinajums_ABSP_ZR.pdf
Sample (or samples) of the study agreement	24.8_pielik_Studiju_lig_eng.pdf	24.8_pielik_Studiju_lig_lv.pdf
If academic study programmes for less than 250 full-time students are implemented within the study direction, the opinion of the Council for Higher Education shall be attached in compliance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.	24.9_pielik_AIP_atzinums_eng.pdf	24.9_pielik_AIP_atzinums_lv.pdf

Public Relations

Title of the higher education institution	<i>Information and Communication Sciences</i>
ProcedureStudyProgram.Name	<i>Public Relations</i>
Education classification code	<i>43342</i>
Type of the study programme	<i>Academic bachelor study programme</i>
Name of the study programme director	<i>Ruta</i>
Surname of the study programme director	<i>Siliņa</i>
E-mail of the study programme director	<i>ruta.silina@rsu.lv</i>
Title of the study programme director	<i>Mg. sc. soc.</i>
Phone of the study programme director	
Goal of the study programme	<p><i>1. To prepare academically educated and professionally qualified, competitive public relations specialists, who would be able to foster reinforcement of research traditions and promote sustainable development in the field of public relations in Latvia.</i></p> <p><i>2. To reinforce the obtained theoretical knowledge in mandatory placement in the public, non-governmental or private sector.</i></p> <p><i>3. To conduct independent research and to summarise its results in a Bachelor's thesis the level of which meets the requirements of a scientific publication.</i></p>
Tasks of the study programme	<p><i>To master:</i></p> <p><i>1) theoretical knowledge in different subjects of communication science;</i></p> <p><i>2) principles and methods of public relations work;</i></p> <p><i>3) subjects in other social sciences (economics, politics, sociology, philosophy, etc.) to be able to successfully understand society development processes;</i></p> <p><i>4) good knowledge of Latvian and foreign languages;</i></p> <p><i>5) ability to present own ideas, to speak in front of an audience, and to use different communication approaches;</i></p> <p><i>6) skills and main methods of conducting scientific research;</i></p> <p><i>7) skills to conduct research in public relations and use theoretical knowledge in the analysis of research results;</i></p> <p><i>8) computer skills and skills in using other modern communication technologies, in particular, the internet, internet databases and multimedia features.</i></p>

Results of the study programme	<p><i>Learning outcomes are defined as knowledge, skills and competences, which the graduate of the study programme will have mastered and will be able to demonstrate on the labour market or when continuing studies at the next level of studies.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1) Ability to demonstrate basic and specialised knowledge characteristic to a communication science and public relations specialist, as well as able to critically evaluate theories and their use in practice.</i> <i>2) Ability to develop a communication plan for resolution of different crisis situations, as well as to shape internal communication of the company using scientific approach in resolution of problems.</i> <i>3) Ability to make decisions and find creative solutions in changing or unclear circumstances, shaping reputation of the organisation and communication with community groups.</i> <i>4) Ability to demonstrate understanding of the principles and methods, ethical and legal aspects of public relations work, as well as knowledge of the specific and uniting regularities of communication sectors and disciplines.</i> <i>5) Ability to use the acquired theoretical basis and skills to analyse a situation, research and solve defined problems.</i> <i>6) Ability to use the acquired theoretical basis and skills in order to formulate and analytically describe information, problems and solutions by creating informative or persuasion campaigns, to popularise different community activities or commercial projects ensuring the most appropriate communication solutions for the achievement of goals of the organisation.</i> <i>7) Ability to use the acquired theoretical basis and skills to perform professional, artistic, innovative or research activity in public relations.</i> <i>8) Ability to participate in the development of the field of public relations by successfully fitting into professional teams, professional industry organisations, by conducting research characteristic for the industry independently or in a team.</i> <i>9) Ability to take on responsibility and initiative when performing work individually, in a team or when managing the work of other people – to lead complex communication campaigns, to solve problems in public relations works, to evaluate the impact of professional activity on society, to participate in the development of the field of public relations.</i> <i>10) Ability to evaluate the impact of own work in the communication field, to make conclusions on the results of public relations solutions, including campaigns, in a critical way and using an evidence-based approach.</i> <i>11) Ability to respect ethical principles in the field of communication, understand and respect generally accepted ethical principles in the field of public relations.</i>
Final examination upon the completion of the study programme	Bachelor's thesis

Study programme forms

Full time studies - 3 years - latvian

Study type and form	<i>Full time studies</i>
Duration in full years	3
Duration in month	0
Language	<i>latvian</i>
Amount (CP)	120
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Secondary education; CE certificate in Latvian; CE certificate in Mathematics, CE certificate in a foreign language or an examination document of an international testing institution. For foreign applicants • Completed secondary education attested by originals or certified copies of the secondary education diploma and official transcript. • Final/Last secondary school semester and exam grades included in the secondary school leaving diploma and the official transcript in compulsory subjects – mathematics, English (results of the internationally recognised English test are also allowed for submission). Should the management of the study programme decide to offer the study programme in English medium to international applicants, additional compulsory subjects can be added to the ones mentioned above. (Unsatisfactory grades are not admissible in any of the subjects included in the diploma and the official transcript (in conformity with the secondary education grading scale of the respective country)). • Two recommendation letters. • Applicant's motivation letter.</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Bachelor of Social Sciences in Communication Science</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Rīga Stradiņš University	RĪGA	DZIRCIEMA IELA 16, KURZEMES RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1007

Part time studies - 3 years, 6 months - latvian

Study type and form	<i>Part time studies</i>
Duration in full years	3
Duration in month	6
Language	<i>latvian</i>
Amount (CP)	120

Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Secondary education; CE certificate in Latvian; CE certificate in Mathematics, CE certificate in a foreign language or an examination document of an international testing institution. For foreign applicants • Completed secondary education attested by originals or certified copies of the secondary education diploma and official transcript. • Final/Last secondary school semester and exam grades included in the secondary school leaving diploma and the official transcript in compulsory subjects – mathematics, English (results of the internationally recognised English test are also allowed for submission). Should the management of the study programme decide to offer the study programme in English medium to international applicants, additional compulsory subjects can be added to the ones mentioned above. (Unsatisfactory grades are not admissible in any of the subjects included in the diploma and the official transcript (in conformity with the secondary education grading scale of the respective country)). • Two recommendation letters. • Applicant's motivation letter.</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Bachelor of Social Sciences in Communication Science</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Rīga Stradiņš University	RĪGA	DZIRCIEMA IELA 16, KURZEMES RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1007

Part time studies - 3 years, 6 months - english

Study type and form	<i>Part time studies</i>
Duration in full years	<i>3</i>
Duration in month	<i>6</i>
Language	<i>english</i>
Amount (CP)	<i>120</i>
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Secondary education; CE certificate in Latvian; CE certificate in Mathematics, CE certificate in a foreign language or an examination document of an international testing institution. For foreign applicants • Completed secondary education attested by originals or certified copies of the secondary education diploma and official transcript. • Final/Last secondary school semester and exam grades included in the secondary school leaving diploma and the official transcript in compulsory subjects – mathematics, English (results of the internationally recognised English test are also allowed for submission). Should the management of the study programme decide to offer the study programme in English medium to international applicants, additional compulsory subjects can be added to the ones mentioned above. (Unsatisfactory grades are not admissible in any of the subjects included in the diploma and the official transcript (in conformity with the secondary education grading scale of the respective country)). • Two recommendation letters. • Applicant's motivation letter.</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Bachelor of Social Sciences in Communication Science</i>

Qualification to be obtained (in english)	
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Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Rīga Stradiņš University	RĪGA	DZIRCIEMA IELA 16, KURZEMES RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1007

Full time studies - 3 years - english

Study type and form	<i>Full time studies</i>
Duration in full years	<i>3</i>
Duration in month	<i>0</i>
Language	<i>english</i>
Amount (CP)	<i>120</i>
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Secondary education; CE certificate in Latvian; CE certificate in Mathematics, CE certificate in a foreign language or an examination document of an international testing institution. For foreign applicants • Completed secondary education attested by originals or certified copies of the secondary education diploma and official transcript. • Final/Last secondary school semester and exam grades included in the secondary school leaving diploma and the official transcript in compulsory subjects – mathematics, English (results of the internationally recognised English test are also allowed for submission). Should the management of the study programme decide to offer the study programme in English medium to international applicants, additional compulsory subjects can be added to the ones mentioned above. (Unsatisfactory grades are not admissible in any of the subjects included in the diploma and the official transcript (in conformity with the secondary education grading scale of the respective country)). • Two recommendation letters. • Applicant's motivation letter.</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Bachelor of Social Sciences in Communication Science</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Rīga Stradiņš University	RĪGA	DZIRCIEMA IELA 16, KURZEMES RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1007

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme)

1.1. Description and analysis of changes in study programme parameters that have taken place since the issue of the previous accreditation certificate of study direction or the license of study programme if study programme is not included in the accreditation page of the study direction

Nr.	Parameter	Analysis of changes
1.	Study direction	—
2.	Name of the study programme	—
3.	Code of the study programme in accordance with the Latvian Education Classification	—
4.	Director of the study programme	—
5.	Scientific degree of the head of the study programme	—
6.	Aim of the study programme	Mapping of the learning outcomes slightly specified the aim of the study programme without significantly changing it.
7.	Objectives of the study programme	Mapping of the learning outcomes slightly specified the objectives of the study programme without changing them significantly.
8.	Learning outcomes to be achieved	Annex 18.1 provides information regarding the analysis of the learning outcomes performed during the mapping process. The learning outcomes are specified according to the aim and objectives of studies and wording of LQF/EQF. Thus, <u>the competence, knowledge and skills acquired in separate study courses</u> contribute to achieving the defined learning outcomes in a logical sequence.
9.	Final examination upon the completion of the study programme	—

Nr.	Parameter	Analysis of changes
10.	Form and type of the study programme	—
11.	Duration of the study programme	—
12.	Language in which the study programme is implemented	During the course of accreditation, it is intended to include English as an implementation language, although there are currently no specific plans to start offering studies in English. According to the plan for the development of the study direction (see Annex 4.1) it is planned to set up a working group to evaluate the extension of the possibilities for the implementation of study programmes.
13.	Amount of the study programme (CP, preferably also ECTS)	—
14.	Admission requirements	—
15.	The degree, to be awarded	
16.	The professional qualification to be awarded	—
17.	Place of implementation	—

1.2. Analysis and assessment of the statistical data on the students of the respective study programme, the dynamics of the number of the students, and the factors affecting the changes to the number of the students. The analysis shall be broken down in the different study forms, types, and languages.

The Bachelor's study programme "Public Relations" is implemented in the form of full-time intramural studies.

Table 1. Number of applicants and students of the study programme “Public Relations”

Year	Number of received applications	Number of state-funded, free places	Number of paid places	Competition for one place (state-funded/paid)	Number of enrolled students
2019	92	2	20	4.18	24
2018	95	2	20	4.32	18
2017	92	2	20	4.18	13
2016	128	2	28	4.27	17

The statistics of the number of students shows stable results, and in 2019, the number of students enrolled in the Bachelor’s study programme “Public Relations” for the first time in the history of the programme (created in 1998) has been higher than the number of those enrolled in the programme “Journalism”. Historically, there were periods, when the number of students starting studies was smaller, which is explained by the so-called demographic pitfall, which is confirmed by shrinking birth indicators (see [CSB statistical data on birth](#)).

Student survey data show that most of the students combine studies (starting from the second year) with work in industry companies. At the end of the study placement (4-week placement in semesters 3 and 4) students are often offered a permanent job. This evidences that students are sufficiently prepared to start working in the industry as communication project assistants, junior specialists, etc.

It is the combination of studies and work that creates challenges most often, as a result of which students might have academic failures. Such a situation is most often identified at the end of the 2nd year of studies (namely, the number of academic failures is too high to be transferred to the 3rd year of studies). As a result, the number of academic failures of students is so high that they have to be expelled due to poor academic performance. However, it is observed that students, who have been expelled due to academic failures (poor academic performance), choose to resume their studies, pass their academic failures and continue individualized studies. In the last three years, also those students have tended to resume studies, who interrupted them more than five years ago.

Annex 16 provides statistical data on students in the reporting period.

The study programme is accredited for full-time and part-time studies, but only full-time studies are currently being implemented (see Annex 16 Student Statistics within the Reporting Period). According to the Study Direction development plan until 2023, considering the dynamics of the number of students and the results of market research, the availability of resources, workload of lecturers, profitability, etc., the Faculty of Communication will consider the possibility to start also part-time implementation of the study programme. At the time of accreditation, the study programme is also submitted for implementation in English, however, the management of the study programme does not have any specific plans for the next two years.

1.3. Analysis and assessment of the interrelation between the name of the study programme, the degree or professional qualification to be acquired or the degree and professional qualification to be acquired, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and the admission requirements.

The name of the academic Bachelor's study programme "Public Relations" and the degree awarded – Bachelor of Social Sciences in communication sciences – are perfectly interlinked with the admission requirements, aims and tasks, and learning outcomes of the professional qualification.

Although RSU FC had several discussions about changing or updating the name of the study programme (because other Latvian universities also implement a study programme with a similar name), each time a conclusion has been made that the current name should be preserved.

Requirements for starting studies – secondary education and knowledge of Latvian and a foreign language, – on the one hand, are general and do not create artificial barriers for those wishing to start studies, but, on the other hand, are justified for the student to be able to study adequately and master the learning material, including in a foreign language (in particular, this applies to professional and academic literature, which is mainly in a foreign language in this field).

The compliance of content of the study programme, the interrelation between the degree and professional qualification to be acquired, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes is confirmed by mapping of study courses, namely, it is known precisely, which study courses foster the achievement of the defined learning outcomes and therefore the implementation of aims and objectives of the entire programme. Mapping results show that the study programme has been created in a structured and consistent way to enable students to master in a logical sequence the study course materials, achieve aims and objectives, and defined learning outcomes of the professional qualification. The fact that the learning outcomes are not ensured "on paper only" is confirmed by feedback from placement supervisors in study placement reports and regular job offers during studies and feedback from graduates themselves.

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof)

2.1. Assessment of the relevance of the content of the study course/ module and the compliance with the needs of the relevant industry and labour market and with the trends in science. Provide information on how and whether the content of the study course/ module is updated in line with the development trends of the relevant industry, labour market, and science. In case of master's and doctoral study programmes, specify and provide the justification as to whether the degrees are awarded in view of the developments and findings in the field of science or artistic creation.

Study courses and their content comply with the needs of the relevant industry and labour market and with science trends. This can be achieved by annual revision of the content of the study programme, the content of study courses, which is fostered by the RSU quality mechanism,

feedback from university lecturers, students and placement supervisors in the place of placement.

Study courses include the objective aimed at studying latest scientific development trends and practical application of this knowledge in research work. For example, by including in the objective of a seminar the requirement to select three or four latest scientific studies on the same topics and to analyse them by drawing a conclusion in order to report it to course mates and the university lecturer.

For example, according to the demand of the labour market, we have also placed more emphasis on communication in the digital environment (for example, one of the topics of the lectures in the study course “Public Relations Writing” is writing public relations texts for the digital environment; a new study course “Digital Marketing Strategy and Tactics” was created; a lecture on creating integrated marketing communication in the digital environment has been included in the study course “Integrated Marketing Communication”, etc.); at the request of the placement providers, we allow students to complete their placement throughout the semester, not just in January and May-June, thus taking into account the busy and not so busy months on the placement sites.

The best link between the content of studies and labour market needs may be ensured by professional and knowledgeable university lecturers. All lecturers of the study programme also practically work in the respective sector allowing the content of the programme and study courses to go hand in hand with development trends of the public relations industry, labour market and science. University lecturers are well-known and appreciated in the community of the relevant sectors, as well they are recognised professionals and experts in the academic environment (part of university lecturers were and are involved in the creation of the National Encyclopaedia and/or are LSP experts, for example, prof. Anda Rožukalne, prof. Deniss Hanovs, prof. Ainārs Dimants, assoc. prof. Sandra Mihailova, assistant professor Klāvs Sedlenieks, assistant professor Dita Rietuma). To be noted, in 2014, the head of the programme Ruta Siliņa received the annual “Golden Button” award of the Latvian Association of Public Relations Professionals.

2.2. Assessment of the interrelation between the information included in the study courses/ modules, the intended learning outcomes, the set aims and other indicators, the relation between the aims of the study course/ module and the aims and intended outcomes of the study programme. In case of a doctoral study programme, provide a description of the main research roadmaps and the impact of the study programme on research and other education levels.

The head of the study programme discusses with the lecturer of the respective study course its content, aims and learning outcomes. The study course content is updated, when needed, to achieve the preferred result. The study course description clearly states its aim and outcomes (knowledge, skills, competences) to be achieved. Taking into account that lecturers of the study programme are experienced professionals, different forms of study content are implemented – not only lectures, but also interactive seminars, case and role plays, visiting lectures, off-site classes, for example, students are delighted to recall classes by prof. D. Hanovs at the Great Cemetery or during the Crazy Days campaign in the *Stockmann* mall, where students were “immersed” into the real environment.

After the implementation of the study course feedback is received from students (surveys and personal meetings) and from the university lecturer (personal conversations).

The assessment of the interrelation between the information included in the study courses, the intended learning outcomes, the set aims and other indicators and the aims and intended outcomes of the study programme is clearly demonstrated by mapping of study courses, which has been performed in the last two years.

2.3. Assessment of the study implementation methods (including the evaluation methods) by providing the analysis of how the study implementation methods (including the evaluation methods) used in the study courses/ modules are selected, what they are, and how they contribute to the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study courses and the aims of the study programme. Provide an explanation of how the student-centred principles are taken into account in the implementation of the study process.

The study programme has until now been implemented only as a full-time study programme in Latvian. In the future, the opportunity of extending the possibilities for the implementation of the study programme and also attracting part-time and foreign students will be considered. The plan for part-time studies is attached in Annex 19. For foreign students, the only difference would be that the “Media Language” would be replaced by the study course “Latvian Language for Foreign Students” in Part A. The course to be replaced may be subject to change at the time of implementation in English.

The study process is implemented mostly as interactive lectures, practical interactive classes or seminars and independent work of students. All the advanced technologies available at RSU are used during lectures and classes.

The compliance of the methods of implementation of studies with the general good practices of European education institutions is confirmed by the comparison provided by *Erasmus* students on how studies take place in their universities. For example, *Erasmus* students from the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium and France indicated in their conversations with lecturers that the study implementation methods at RSU were the same as in their universities. In turn, Spanish students emphasise that they like very much the interactive approach here, which ensures regular presentation of own research (seminar work), which is rare in Spanish universities – students say with a laugh that “they will be better trained and, when they return to their university, they will be better prepared for defence of their Bachelor’s theses than their course mates, for whom that would be their first public presentation”.

During their studies at RSU, students have a possibility to ask questions they are interested in, discuss them with the lecturer and fellow students. Problem-centred teaching strategies are used for studies. All additional study materials are freely available to the students in e-studies environment. It also provides references to additional information sources for studying the specific issues, as well as materials for self-guided learning (for example, practical assignments that can be done at home).

Both formative and summative evaluation is used in studies. The formative evaluation takes place during everyday study process: by asking control questions to the students during the contact lessons, as well as by discussing the independent works of students that are practised during the study process. The summative evaluation takes place at the conclusion of each study course as a test or examination. Summative evaluation tests are organised in a written form (in paper format or electronically) or as oral discussions. At the conclusion of studies the student selects a topic he or she is interested in and in cooperation with selected paper supervisor develops and defends the

Bachelor's thesis.

As already mentioned, at the end of each study course, students are asked to complete the evaluation survey on the RSU e-environment, wherein they can express their opinion and provide proposals both regarding the content of the study course and the methods of implementation thereof, as well as competences and work style of the lecturers. Therefore, study courses are updated each year in accordance with the evaluation given by the students. Representatives of the students are also involved in faculty councils ensuring representation of the opinion in decision-making.

RSU practises student-centred education, providing that:

- an independently learning student is at the centre of the study process;
- learning outcomes are clearly formulated and known, and the student studies to achieve them;
- students know and understand the learning outcomes defined for the study programme or course;
- evaluation of the student's achievements is formed in a way that it is possible to ensure whether and at what level the planned learning outcomes have been achieved;
- task of the teaching staff is to facilitate the studies of the student so that the student would achieve the set learning outcomes;
- it can be observed that aggregate of outcomes of separate study courses forms the learning outcomes of the study programme.

Learning outcomes of the study programme are formulated in a student-centred way and:

- establish a unified understanding of students and teaching staff regarding of what is expected from the student at the end of the course or the programme;
- provide the students with opportunity to study more effectively, i.e., students clearly know what knowledge and skills they will obtain if they successfully complete the respective course. The students can also track what they already have learned and what they still need to learn, and what is their progress towards achieving the outcomes of the programme;
- present a tool for the teaching staff to be able to organise the study process more effectively: lectures, seminars, group work, discussions, laboratory work, etc., by selecting topics and materials, as well as learning strategies in accordance with the learning outcomes specified for the study course or study programme;
- create a mutual understanding between the teaching staff and colleagues for achievement of which learning outcome the course is studied and the respective learning method is selected;
- identify those areas where certain types of learning outcomes overlap or lack (by comparing courses and compliance thereof with the programme);
- aid the students in their choice of courses to study in accordance with learning outcomes the student wishes to achieve;
- provide clear information for employers on knowledge and skills the students will have obtained, as well as provide an opportunity to assess this knowledge and skills in accordance with the defined professional qualification.

The study implementation and evaluation methods used foster the achievement of the results of study courses and the achievement of the set aim of the study programme.

Study process and study course descriptions are in line with Section 1(8) of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (1 CP corresponds to 40 academic hours of work). Paragraph 9 of the Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No. 240 "Regulations on the National Standard of Academic Education"

provides that contact hours make up no less than 40% of a Bachelor's study programme in full-time studies (except for the amount intended for placement and writing of the Bachelor's thesis). **In planning of the study programme "Public Relations", the amount of contact hours makes 41 % of the study programme.** In addition to contact hours in the form of lectures and seminars, in order to implement the aims, objectives of the study programme and the planned innovative solutions for creation of skills, knowledge and competences, solutions for their transfer and co-working, several formats of contact hours are implemented in each study course, including individual consultations, visiting lectures, study visits, participation in RSU Research Week and other wider public scientific and research events – conferences, seminars, discussions. Students contemplate on the ideas learned during these study activities outside lectures and seminars in home assignments and independent work. Individual consultations in each study course after each covered topic promote individual approach with regard to each student and with regard to profound understanding of the course being learned and its wider context (for example, link to other fields of social sciences, specifics in different professional areas, etc.) and solutions to resolve them.

The amount of contact hours of **individual consultations** depends on the diversity and level of complexity of topics of the respective study course. During them, lecturers of the study course discuss with the student in detail aspects of the topic covered in the study course, the content and methods of fulfilment of independent work – individual studies, reading, creative works, home assignments and other elements of independent studies. In this way, lecturers ensure more active involvement and higher motivation of students to participate in the research of a communication problem and in discussion, implementation of solutions. Individual consultations are organised immediately after the class in an auditorium (lecture or seminar) or department, upon individual agreement, or, taking into account experience, also by phone and e-mail, contacting about different matters related to the course content and individual studies.

Also, in addition to lectures and seminars, several **visiting lectures** are implemented in each semester, on which there are agreements with representatives of companies and other business and administration industry organisations.

The study process includes study visits to companies or organisations, which are thematically related to the study course being learned or some latest development (for example, in academic year 2019/2020 such visits were made to *Swedbank*, where communication specialists of the bank familiarised with integration of public relations into marketing communication, to the design company *DPJN*, where they learned about the development and specifics of packaging as an element of integrated marketing communication).

40 contact hours are also planned for participation of students in the RSU Research Week every year and in other broader **public science and research events – conferences, seminars, discussions**. Participation of students in the RSU Research Week includes plenary sessions of the research week and attendance of parallel sessions, as well as increasingly more frequent preparation of a publication and presentation to speak at the conference. After attendance of sessions, students contemplate on the obtained knowledge in home assignments and independent work, reflecting the latest scientific and practical developments in trends of the communication industry. The students, who participate in the conference with a report, receive specific advisory support from lecturers in the preparation of an abstract, article and presentation for the conference.

In addition to lectures, classes and individual consultations, for the achievement of the aim and the implementation of objectives in study courses lecturers will provide scientific, methodological and practical **project management support** – six contact hours per semester, on average.

For more detailed planned distribution of contact hours see the tables below.

Total amount of contact hours

Semester	Credit points				CH per CP A	CH per CP B	CH per CP total
	A	B	C	Total			
1.	16	8	0	20	300	96	50%
2.	16	8	0	20	224	92	40%
3.	13	11	2	20	176	64	43%
4.	10	14	0	20	56	146	32%
5.	4	20	0	20	112	211	40%
6.	20	0	0	20			
Total:	79	61	2	120	868	609	41%

Additional contact hours

Learning activities	Semester	Contact hours
Individual consultations	1	76
Individual consultations	2	76
Individual consultations	3	40
Individual consultations	4	24
Individual consultations	5	20
Research Week	1	40
Research Week	3	40
Research Week	5	40
Project	1	4
Project	2	4
Project	3	4
Project	4	4

Project	5	4
Visiting lectures	1	4
Visiting lectures	2	4
Visiting lectures	3	4
Visiting lectures	4	4
Visiting lectures	5	4

2.4. If the study programme entails a traineeship, provide the analysis and assessment of the relation between the tasks of the traineeship included in the study programme and the learning outcomes of the study programme. Specify how the higher education institution/ college supports the students within the study programme regarding the fulfilment of the tasks set for students during the traineeship.

Although the study programme is an academic Bachelor's study programme, there is placement on the 2nd year of studies to ensure the link between knowledge and skills of students and real job.

In semesters 3 and 4 students have 4 weeks of placement (8 weeks in total in the 2nd year of studies). "Instructions of placement report" (see Annex X) have been drafted, which clearly define the aim, deadlines for papers, placement supervisors at RSU and specific tasks. This material is available to the students in e-studies environment in advance. Placement supervisors at RSU are available to students for resolution of placement-related issues, if any.

Each placement has its tasks, the solution to which should be described in the placement report. Moreover, placement tasks are broken down in accordance with the places of placement, i.e., whether the placement place is a public relations agency or not, because this has a significant influence on the approach to the implementation of public relations. Placement includes tasks, which are directly related to the study material previously acquired by the student, i.e., placement in semester 3 includes presumably simple tasks, while the tasks for placement in semester 4 are more detailed and complex. For example, one task for placement in semester 3 provides for the preparation of a list of media contacts, while placement in semester 4 requires preparation of a press release and an evaluation, which media such a material should be sent to. At the end of the placement in semester 4 the student should analyse the differences between both placements and what new he or she learned during the placement.

In addition to the tasks given by the university, during placement students should also perform tasks provided by the respective place of placement, therefore, students have the possibility to learn different practices of implementation of similar tasks.

Employers offer many placement opportunities for public relations students, and such offers are received and sent to students on a regular basis. Taking into account the specifics of the public relations sector, i.e., the existence of the so-called hot months and periods, when placement is not offered to trainees, the university is forthcoming in having placement – it is permitted to have

placement in the 2nd year of studies also in a period other than the one specified in the “Instructions of placement report” provided that all placement tasks are fulfilled and the total placement period is equal to the minimum time of placement necessary (160 hours for each placement).

Readiness of students for the labour market requirements is confirmed by the fact that placement places offer a job to the most knowledgeable and motivated students.

2.5. Analysis and assessment of the topics of the final theses of the students, their relevance in the respective field, including the labour market, and the evaluations of the final theses.

Thematic directions of final theses of students are defined in accordance with development of the industry and market, and topics and specialisation directions of lecturers and professors of the department, as well as projects currently implemented by the department. However, since students choose topics independently and formulate them together with scientific supervisors of the study programme and the paper, final theses may also be on innovative topics differing from the above-mentioned ones.

Overall, thematic directions of Bachelor's theses can be broken down in the following way:

- analysis of public relations, political and integrated marketing communication;
- analysis of the impact of organisational obstacles related to the communication process on the results of communication to be achieved;
- analysis of digitalisation, social media and networks;
- communication, society and culture, paying special attention to the analysis of behavioural change communication solutions.

It has been noticed that topics of final theses follow market trends, namely, as soon as there is something new in the industry, several students choose to study it, for example, a rapid development of *influencers* in recent years has fostered intense scientific interest of students in this topic.

Students receive an assessment for their final thesis by successfully defending it – presenting and answering questions of the commission. It should be noted that papers of many students in the period being covered were assessed as excellent and have been a valuable contribution to the development of communication science in Latvia, as well as being part of the research result base of the department, increasing the expertise of RSU Faculty of Communication. As the programme management and lecturers - supervisors of the Bachelor's theses work particularly to increase the motivation of students and the quality of the Bachelor's theses. Overall quality of the Bachelor's theses is not bad. In recent years, more than two-thirds of the papers have got the assessment 7 (good), 8 (very good) or 9 (excellent). There have been no papers that have been assessed as unsatisfactory by the Commission. In addition, the average mark has increased in recent years (i.e., an improvement in average). Such result was achieved through motivational and preparatory activities, including, in particular, the study course “Seminar for Bachelor's Thesis” which was designed to facilitate the drafting of the Final Paper, development of the concept and research design. Abstract of the Bachelor's thesis is evaluated in the defence of abstracts; the first version of the paper is evaluated by the commission set up from the teaching staff of the Department of Communication Studies of RSU Faculty of Communication (in the recent years this is replaced by students' participation in RSU conference), that carefully assesses the quality of the paper and

advises not to submit the paper if the quality of its first version is not high enough. It should be noted that the majority of students who do not submit their paper on the recommendation of the commission, improve its quality and defend it in one of the following years.

Annex 17.1 contains a table on the compliance of the study programme with the State Education Standard.

Annex 18.1 contains mapping of the study courses for the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study programme.

Annex 19 contains the curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme).

Annex 20 contains descriptions of the study courses of the study programme.

2.6. Analysis and assessment of the outcomes of the surveys conducted among the students, graduates, and employers, and the use of these outcomes for the improvement of the content and quality of studies by providing the respective examples.

Surveys about each study course, as well as surveys of graduates are organised on a regular basis.

Surveys on study courses include the following main questions: the obtained knowledge and skills, conditions of learning the study course, cooperation with the university lecturer, progress of study courses. Students are generally satisfied with the range of lectures, their content, cooperation with lecturers and the study environment of the higher education institution.

Some quotes from evaluation questionnaires for students:

- *The material presented by the lecturer fully meets the requirements and latest developments of the course.* (Internal Communication)
- *Nothing to add. The study course seems to be very well structured and the information and materials available in the e-studies environment evidence of this.* (Psychology of Communication)
- *A very well structured and informative study course.* (Communication Law and Ethics)
- *Each lecture was very interesting. Perfectly organised. Excellent teacher! Very interesting lectures, if you work at home – watch the indicated films. Everything will be explained, you just have to ask!* (Introduction to the World Film History and Theory I)
- *The lecturers were encouraging, willingly answered questions of students, also for the second time, if necessary.* (Introduction to the Studies and Speciality)
- *I thank the lecturer for the course! It was a very valuable and practical course, which provided the possibility to look at the integration of communication from different angles. The course is very valuable and practically useful.* (Integrated Marketing Communication)

Surveys for graduates contain questions about satisfaction with the choice of the study programme and the higher education institution, the study process, the evaluation of obtained knowledge, skills and competences.

8 students graduated the study programme in 2019, and part of them filled in the questionnaire.

In total, graduates evaluated the study programme and the higher education institution positively, recognising that study programmes have a good reputation and they are appreciated in the industry. Students are generally satisfied with the obtained knowledge and skills, personal growth

and prospects in their profession.

Some quotes from the recommendations of graduates mentioned in evaluation questionnaires:

- *To adapt the study programme in accordance with the knowledge that is nowadays necessary to those working in the PR field. It would be useful to study Google Adwords, Analytics, which are requested at work and highly appreciated. The programme is very good and educational, however, it only provides a theoretical knowledge base, which is too little in today's practice, because we lack knowledge and learning of the tools and software widely used in the work environment nowadays.*
- *A Health Communication course and a Social Networks Marketing course would have to be introduced.*
- *I would recommend giving more thought to the daily lecture timetable. To organise on the third year of studies a lecture telling in detail how to correctly write a Bachelor's thesis, what should specifically be considered and how important this is when completing studies.*
- *Lecturers should provide more feedback to students – corrections of papers and explanation of assessments were mainly not received. More practical work with lecturers during seminars is necessary rather than preparation of practical work independently at home.*
- *To organise more practical work and visiting lectures in real companies for students to have an idea about the labour market.*

Part of proposals of graduates have been implemented, namely, increasingly more visiting lecturers are invited for a specific topic of lecture, a study course "Communication of Behavioural Change" has been introduced; a study course "Bachelor's Thesis Seminar" has been created by refusing from the second foreign language (in the 2nd and 3rd year of studies) and offering the study course related to the field (for example, "Stylistics and Editing"), we managed to create a more compact lecture timetable (foreign languages significantly complicated the lecture timetable, because lecturers from the Language Centre teach foreign languages to the entire university, moreover, language courses were divided by levels of knowledge, thus fragmenting lecture timetable in individual groups even more); the possibility of feedback by lecturers and the head of the study programme with regard to the evaluation, comments and proposals provided by students about each study course has improved.

In the academic year 2020/2021, there are plans to start a new study course "Digital Marketing Strategy and Tactics", which includes knowledge on successful planning, implementation and analysis of e-communication.

The survey of employers regarding the correspondence of the learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competence) of the study programme to the needs of the labour market is conducted within the framework of the study direction. Employers appreciate highly qualified and well-trained information and communication professionals, and support the viewpoint that studies should be brought closer to practice. Their suggestion is to invite successful professionals of the sector to teach at the University; to teach students to work with modern technologies and applications and to find the possibility for training of teaching staff in enterprises. It should be noted that the programme management is aware of these challenges and follow these recommendations in its day-to-day work, but due to the changing and diverse environment of the information and communication sector, it is not always possible to ensure detailed specialization. The advantage of the programme that focus to a large extent on a leader, a professional with broad outlook and in-depth views, is in its versatility and openness to the new. However, the programme management is always looking for ways to get professionals involved in teaching. There are also requirements for recruiting practitioners in the employers' feedback. So, in the last year of study, the representatives of the following organisations and companies were involved in the teaching process:

Communications Department of the State Chancellery, the Latvian Institute, Printful, DPJN, AirBaltic, Maxima, Swedbank, Kantar and other organisations. Solutions are being sought for this task, because we are facing challenges that are common in higher education of Latvia in general: 1) many successful entrepreneurs in the sector and practitioners do not have appropriate education to work in the academic study programme, 2) the remuneration offered by the university to high-class professionals is not competitive, 3) employers often contradict themselves: on the one hand, they claim that university students and lecturers should learn the specific nature of the sector and the latest practices and methods directly in the companies, on the other hand, they are not willing to offer their own resources (time, technologies, knowledge) for training. Therefore, the debate between entrepreneurs of the sector, professional associations and universities on solutions to these contradictions should be encouraged, assuming that closer cooperation requires specific planning, agreeing on goals and expectations and restructuring of the employers' organisation for collaborative and sustainable development.

Survey results are discussed in the following forms:

- meetings with students (1-2 times each semester);
- meetings of the Department of Communication Studies (1-2 times per semester);
- meetings of the Council of the Faculty of Communication (2-3 times per semester);
- examination of complaints;
- listening to proposals of students also in informal talks.

The changes related to survey results are implemented in the following forms:

- by answering to questions and proposals of students;
- in personal talks with university lecturers, asking them to make an improvement, proposing changes;
- by informing other RSU structures, which provide the environment or services for implementation of study courses.

2.7. Provide the assessment of the options of the incoming and outgoing mobility of the students, the dynamics of the number of the used opportunities, and the recognition of the study courses acquired during the mobility.

RSU offers students [extensive mobility opportunities using Erasmus+](#) programme. Students of the study programme "Public Relations" are offered to go on *Erasmus+* exchange programmes in the 2nd year of studies for one semester (at the student's choice and in semester 3 or 4 using the offer of the cooperating university). Several students choose to use this opportunity every year. Incoming mobility exceeds outgoing mobility many times, namely, two to three students of this study programme use *Erasmus+* every year, while incoming mobility (or the number of students learning the study courses offered in this study programme) has been 13-16 students from foreign universities on average in recent years.

The head of the study programme informs and motivates students to use the opportunities provided by *Erasmus+* at regular meetings with the study course and during individual conversations, however, participation of students is comparatively poor. Potential reasons of poor participation of students is that part of students wishing to go do not qualify for *Erasmus+* conditions or perceive this opportunity as a tourism trip rather than an opportunity to learn.

The students who have used *Erasmus+* opportunities are satisfied.

Recognition of study courses is subject to careful individual assessment and in accordance with the procedures at RSU. That is, since the courses learned at foreign universities in most cases differ in content and scope from those study courses of the academic Bachelor's degree study programme "Public Relations" in the respective semester, the management of the programme has carefully evaluated the content and scope of each study course learned at a foreign institution of higher education and, considering the interests and needs of the student (mainly in the context of the selected topic for Semester Paper of Bachelor's thesis), a list of courses to be learned within mobility is compiled in such a way that the learning outcomes obtained in the study courses could be comparable to the learning outcomes of the courses to be studied in RSU programme. Flexibility is provided by the relatively large number of elective courses following the first semester of study.

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme)

3.1. Assessment of the compliance of the resources and provision (study provision, scientific support (if applicable), informative provision (including libraries), material and technical provision, and financial provision) with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the learning outcomes to be achieved by providing the respective examples. Whilst carrying out the assessment, it is possible to refer to the information provided for in the criteria set forth in Part II, Chapter 3, sub-paragraphs 3.1 to 3.3.

Students are informed and trained (in the study course "Introduction to the Studies and Speciality" information literacy classes) how to search for and find necessary information in databases of scientific articles.

In several study courses (for example, "Introduction to the Studies and Speciality", "Crisis Communication", "Integrated Marketing Communication") students of the study programme get tasks to find in the [databases of scientific articles to which RSU is subscribed](#) latest research in the industry on a specific topic relating to the topic of the studies, course – to read, analyse and conduct a general analysis and then present it to course mates and the university lecturer.

Every year, RSU FC allocates considerable funds for material and technical provisions. FC has provided students with a good material and technical provisions – students can use for the needs of studies photo, video and audio equipment, a well-equipped multimedia studio and a photo laboratory belonging to FC. Material and technical provisions are renewed and supplemented on a regular basis.

The implementation of the study course "Student Media" is most directly related to the material and technical provisions provided by FC, and without it the implementation of this study course would not be possible.

In order to provide convenient approach of students to study materials, they are placed in the e-environment, which is available through the student portal and *MyRSU* mobile app.

Students have access to comfortable and well-equipped study environment in the entire university, namely, during breaks or at any other time environment students can do everything necessary for

the study process not only in the library (there is free internet, study desks and chairs, power connection, and so on in university halls).

3.2. Assessment of the study provision and scientific support, including the resources provided within the cooperation with other science institutes and institutions of higher education (applicable to the doctoral study programmes).

Not applicable.

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (4. Teaching Staff)

4.1. Analysis and assessment of the changes to the composition of the teaching staff over the reporting period and their impact on the study quality.

The implementation of the study direction involves highly qualified lecturers who are experts in the field and specialise in the respective study course topics.

Those lecturers are involved in the implementation of the study direction and programmes, whose qualification and abilities are at high level and have been evaluated during a long cooperation period, therefore changes to the composition of the teaching staff are relatively insignificant – lecturers of only some study courses have changed, for example, in study courses “Internal Communication”, “Marketing” this has happened based on the answers provided by students about the lecturer and the study course, as well as possibilities of invited lecturers to read lectures.

The list of teaching staff of the study programme was extended by introducing new courses in the study programme, for example, lecturers of the department representing specific media competence area were involved in the implementation of the study programme – *Dr. art.* Dita Rietuma (“Introduction to the World Film History and Theory I and II”), *Dr. philol.* Dite Liepa (“Media Language”, “Public Relations Text Writing”, “Stylistics and Editing”).

Full-time university lecturers are required to participate in research activities that are regulated by staff job descriptions. Depending on the type of academic position, the following proportion of duties and responsibilities of the employee in scientific and research activities has been determined:

- assistants carry out scientific and research work 30% of the working time;
- lecturers carry out scientific and research work 15% of the working time;
- assistant professors, associate professors, professors carry out scientific and research work 20% of the working time.

The division of responsibilities within a structural unit may be changed by the head of the structural unit in agreement with the employee, according to the planning of the pedagogical work and the projects to be implemented.

The scientific results of the academic staff are summarised once a year and included in the

scientific activity report. For some groups of staff, they are related to the principles of remuneration and motivation. Lecturer achievements are included in their CV.

RSU is constantly planning and implementing activities aimed at motivating the academic staff to engage in high-level scientific and research work, in particular associate professors and professors (aiming to reach 60% of working time spent on research), which will encourage new professionals to engage in industry research, and contribute to the overall development of science at national and international level.

4.2. Assessment of the compliance of the qualification of the teaching staff members (academic staff members, visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers, and visiting assistants) involved in the implementation of the study programme with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the provisions set out in the respective regulatory enactments. Provide information on how the qualification of the teaching staff members contributes to the achievement of the learning outcomes.

The qualification of teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programme corresponds to the conditions of implementation of the study programme and the requirements of regulatory enactments, as well as ensures the achievement of aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and respective study courses. When reviewing and supplementing the academic Bachelor's study programme "Public Relations" on a regular basis, research directions and expertise fields of lecturers of the departments have been taken into account. Therefore, most of lecturers engaged in the implementation of the programme, are employees of the RSU Faculty of Communication.

A large proportion the teaching staff are professionals of their sector (for example, the lecturer Ruta Siliņa is the Head of the Communication and international Cooperation Department of the Office of Ombudsman of the Republic of Latvia, the lecture Vita Savicka has created and still runs a public relations company "Baltic Communication Partners", Ieva Zaumane, the lecturer of the study course "Internal Communication" is a founder of "Systemic Change" and a strategic advisor for internal communication, and Elita Račiņa, a recognised strategic and digital marketing practitioner in Latvia, is a lecturer of the study courses "Marketing" and "Digital Marketing Strategy and Tactics", etc.).

On the other hand, the academic and scientific potential of the teaching staff of the programme continues to be strengthened. Several lecturers of the programme, such as the lecturer Ruta Siliņa, the lecturer Normunds Kozlovs and the lecturer Vita Savicka have recently studied at RSU Department of Doctoral Studies, while others have gained a senior academic position, for example, Anda Rožukalne, the Dean of RSU Faculty of Communication was elected a professor. Scientific and academic degrees are also considered when recruiting freelance teachers and inviting visiting lecturers; most of them have a doctoral degree or they are professionals of their field with a Master's degree (practitioners).

See Annex 6.1: Basic information about the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study direction and their language skills.

See Annex 6.4: A list of publications of the teaching staff during the reporting period.

See Annex 6.5: A summary of publications of the teaching staff involved in the study direction, their

participation in conferences and projects and experience in the sector.

Forms of attracting potential students are constantly being improved by providing widely available information about the programme. As one of the plans is to offer studies in English. At present, the following study courses can be learned in English "Speech Communication", "Government Communication", "Crisis Communication", "History of Ideas" and others. Although these courses are currently being implemented under the Erasmus + exchange programmes, it is planned to increase the number of courses offered annually so that in the future the programme can also be implemented in English.

In order to make sure of the foreign language skills of the teaching staff implementing study programmes in English, RSU periodically organises a detailed English language proficiency test and, if necessary, additional training. If the study programme is implemented in English, lecturers with at least B2 English knowledge will be involved. See Annex 24.5 for a statement from RSU that the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programmes within the study direction, which is fully or in part implemented in English, have the English proficiency at least at level B2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

4.3. Information on the number of the scientific publications of the academic staff members, involved in the implementation of the doctoral study programme, as published during the reporting period by listing the most significant publications published in Scopus or WoS CC indexed journals. As for the social sciences, humanitarian sciences, and the science of art, the scientific publications published in ERIH+ indexed journals may be additionally specified (if applicable).

Not applicable.

4.4. Information on the participation of the academic staff, involved in the implementation of the doctoral study programme, in scientific projects as project managers or prime contractors/ subproject managers/ leading researchers by specifying the name of the relevant project, as well as the source and the amount of the funding. Provide information on the reporting period (if applicable).

Not applicable.

4.5. Provide examples of the involvement of the academic staff in the scientific research and/or artistic creation activities both at national and at international level (in the fields related to the content of the study programme), as well as the use of the obtained information in the study process.

All lecturers of the department and basically also all the lecturers involved in the implementation of the study programme (except invited lecturers having high qualification, long experience and

significant experience in the respective professional field) perform scientific research work in parallel to their pedagogical work. The insights and examples from such work enrich the study course content making it up-to-date and close to practice. Since study methods emphasise the principle of participation, in discussions lecturers tend to use what they have tested in their research and examples as a basis. Lecturers actively involve students in research work also in different projects implemented by the department. Topics of Bachelor's theses are often related to the topics of the research projects implemented by lecturers of the department. A bright example is the NRP project ECOSOC-LV 5.2.5. "Reflections on values and action resulting from socioeconomic changes", in which A. Rožukalne, I. Skulte, N. Kozlovs, K. Sedlenieks and other lecturers of the study programme participated. And also the [internet aggressiveness index](#) developed by lecturers of RSU FC – S.Kruks, A. Rožukalne, K. Sedlenieks, R. Siliņa and I. Skulte.

4.6. Assessment of the cooperation between the teaching staff members by specifying the mechanisms used to promote the cooperation and ensure the interrelation between the study courses/ modules. Specify also the proportion of the number of the students and the teaching staff within the study programme (at the moment of the submission of the Self-Assessment Report).

Director of the study programme shall discuss with the lecturers the content of the course and the relationship with other study courses. If necessary, the content of study courses shall be specified. Such negotiations are usually preceding in the beginning of the year/semester of study or before the start of a new course.

Cooperation between lecturers is also discussed at the meetings of the department and the faculty council. If any shortcomings are identified, they are initially addressed at the level of programme directors and lecturer; if this does not help, then at the level of the head/dean and lecturer. However, there are very few cases of this kind.

Good links and cooperation have been developed with the "Student media" lecturer Marta Herca, since some of the content of projects, lectures or training visits carried out in other courses can serve as a basis for the performance of student media tasks.

Students' assessment of a study course (at the end of the course) is one of the means of preventing content from overlapping or other loopholes. In turn, the operational response uses communication between the senior of the course and the director of the study programme.

When calculating the total number of lecturers, as indicated in the accreditation documents of the Academic Bachelor's study programme "Public Relations", the total number of lecturers involved in the implementation of the programme is 38, while the total number of students was 52 on 3 October 2019, so the ratio of students and lecturers is 1.37. It should be noted that part of the study courses is taught together for students of several bachelor's study programmes, thereby sharing resources. The joint implementation of study courses strengthens the financial cost-effectiveness of study programmes and supports interdisciplinary cooperation between students.

See for more information: Description of the Study Direction, Section II, paragraphs 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6.

Annexes

III. Description of the Study Programme - 1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme		
Compliance of the joint study programme with the provisions of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (table)		
Statistics on the students over the reporting period	16_pielik_SA_Statistika_eng.pdf	16_pielik_SA_Statistika_lv.pdf
III. Description of the Study Programme - 2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof		
Compliance of the study programme with the State Education Standard	17.1_pielik_Atbalst_Izglit_Stand_eng.pdf	17.1_pielik_Atbalst_Izglit_Stand_lv.pdf
Compliance of the qualification to be acquired upon completion of the study programme with the professional standard (if applicable)		
Compliance of the study programme with the specific regulatory framework applicable to the relevant field (if applicable)		
Mapping of the study courses/ modules for the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study programme	18.1_pielik_StK_St-rezult_kartejums_SA_eng.pdf	18.1_pielik_StK_StR_kartejums_lv.pdf
Curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme)	19_pielik_SA_planojums_ENG.pdf	19_pielik_SA_planojums_LV.pdf
Descriptions of the study courses/ modules	20-1_pielik_Studiju_kursu_apraksti_SA_ENG.pdf	20-1_pielik_Studiju_kursu_apraksti_SA_LV.pdf
Description of the Study Direction - Other mandatory attachments		
Sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme.	24-1_ABSP_SA_diploms_gatavs_ENG.pdf	24-1_ABSP_SA_diploms_gatavs.pdf
Description of the Study Programme - Other mandatory attachments		
Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college will provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme or at another higher education institution/ college (a contract with another accredited higher education institution/ college), in case the implementation of the study programme is discontinued	24.2_pielikums_Apliecinajums_par_citu_StP_IKZ_parakstits_tulk.pdf	24.2_pielikums_Apliecinajums_par_citu_StP_IKZ_parakstits.pdf
Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college guarantees to the students a compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the higher education institution/ college (actions or failure to act) and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme	24.3_pielikums_Apliecinajums_par_zaudejumiem_IKZ_parakstits_eng.pdf	24.3_pielikums_Apliecinajums_par_zaudejumiem_IKZ_parakstits.pdf
Confirmation of the higher education institution/ college that the teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language according to European language levels (see the levels under www.europass.lv), if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language.	24.5_pielik_Apliecin_anglu_val_StV_IKZ_parakstits_eng.pdf	24.5_pielik_Apliecin_anglu_val_StV_IKZ_parakstits.pdf
If the study programmes in the study direction subject to the assessment are doctoral study programmes, a confirmation that at least five teaching staff members with doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field or sub-field of science, in which the study programme has intended to award a scientific degree.		
If academic study programmes are implemented within the study direction, a document confirming that the academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the provisions set out in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause three of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education	24-7_pielik_apliecinajums_ABSP_SA_eng.pdf	24-7_pielik_apliecinajums_ABSP_SA_lv.pdf
Sample (or samples) of the study agreement	24.8_pielik_Studiju_lig_eng.pdf	24.8_pielik_Studiju_lig_lv.pdf
If academic study programmes for less than 250 full-time students are implemented within the study direction, the opinion of the Council for Higher Education shall be attached in compliance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.	24.9_pielik_AIP_atzinums_eng.pdf	24.9_pielik_AIP_atzinums_SA.pdf

Photography

Title of the higher education institution	<i>Information and Communication Sciences</i>
ProcedureStudyProgram.Name	<i>Photography</i>
Education classification code	<i>43321</i>
Type of the study programme	<i>Academic bachelor study programme</i>
Name of the study programme director	<i>Alnis</i>
Surname of the study programme director	<i>Stakle</i>
E-mail of the study programme director	<i>alnis.stakle@rsu.lv</i>
Title of the study programme director	<i>Dr. paed.</i>
Phone of the study programme director	
Goal of the study programme	<i>To train Bachelors of Social Sciences in communication science with professional skills for implementing photography projects and who are familiar with the principles of photography media, media economics, relation of photography to the creative industries, the specifics of application of photography in the commercial and art sectors, are able to independently study and forecast current trends in the use of photography and professionally manage and implement the production of various photos, have studied theoretically and practically the theory and history of photography and communication, basics of media management, interactions of photography and other media in historical and contemporary terms, the use of photography on the Internet, in the press, advertising and the arts, and are able to evaluate the operating principles of other photography-based projects. To train academically educated, creative and professional highly qualified photograph media professionals who are able to not only compete in the labour market of diverse business sectors, but also, based on the acquired theoretical knowledge and practical skills, also autonomously, critically, responsibly and skilfully implement their creative and professional ideas in photo media, improving the quality of photo use in various commercial and non-commercial areas of Latvia.</i>

Tasks of the study programme	<p><i>Objectives of the study programme “Photography” are to provide students with the following knowledge, skills and competence:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Theoretical knowledge in philosophy, management, sociology, psychology necessary for a successful understanding of the processes of knowledge society development and orientation in the creative industry and the social environment;</i> <i>2. In-depth knowledge of various communication science subjects and communication research methods;</i> <i>3. To understand the cultural implications of the digital age while studying in a creative collaborative environment, as well as to manage personal creative projects in photography individually and in groups;</i> <i>4. An open and critical view of photographic media, reinforcing the links between the professional and academic environment;</i> <i>5. The use of digital and analogue technologies in photography and photography as a professional communication medium;</i> <i>6. Interdisciplinary links of photographic media with cinematography, television, internet, print media, visual communication, social media, art, producing their creative work for the needs of a variety of commercial and non-commercial projects;</i> <i>7. Fundamentals of communication psychology, with an in-depth focus on photographic media manifestations in contemporary culture;</i> <i>8. The competence to present one’s ideas, to speak in front of an audience, and to use different verbal and visual communication approaches;</i> <i>9. Scientific research skills, based on qualitative and quantitative research traditions.</i>
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Results of the study programme	<p>1. Understanding the photographic media communication industry;</p> <p>2. The competence to lead and implement research and creative communication projects in photography individually and in groups;</p> <p>3. Knowledge and professional competence in the use of digital and analogue technologies in photography and understanding of the interdisciplinary links between photography and cinematography, television, the Internet, printed media, visual communication, social media and art;</p> <p>4. Knowledge and critical analysis skills of photographic media capabilities in printed and Internet media, as well as in business, art, design, advertising and other contemporary cultural fields;</p> <p>5. Ability to use appropriate theoretical knowledge and research methods to solve current industry problems in a professional way and strengthen the development of the industry;</p> <p>6. Ability to plan and manage content creation processes for photography projects, both individually and as a team;</p> <p>7. Ability to take responsibility for decision making in unpredictable working conditions; to independently obtain, select and analyse information and use it; to make decisions and solve problems in the field of communication science and in the daily work of a professional;</p> <p>8. Understanding of the professional ethics of communication. Ability to evaluate the impact of one's professional activities on society, as well as to participate in the academic and business development of visual communication;</p> <p>9. High-level competence in using communication theories and research methods to analyse verbal, visual and multimodal messages as part of culture.</p>
Final examination upon the completion of the study programme	Bachelor's thesis

Study programme forms

Full time studies - 3 years - latvian

Study type and form	Full time studies
Duration in full years	3
Duration in month	0
Language	latvian
Amount (CP)	120

Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Secondary education; CE certificate in Latvian; CE certificate in Mathematics, CE certificate in a foreign language or an examination document of an international testing institution. For foreign applicants • Completed secondary education attested by originals or certified copies of the secondary education diploma and official transcript. • Final/Last secondary school semester and exam grades included in the secondary school leaving diploma and the official transcript in compulsory subjects – mathematics, English (results of the internationally recognised English test are also allowed for submission). Should the management of the study programme decide to offer the study programme in English medium to international applicants, additional compulsory subjects can be added to the ones mentioned above. (Unsatisfactory grades are not admissible in any of the subjects included in the diploma and the official transcript (in conformity with the secondary education grading scale of the respective country)). • Two recommendation letters. • Applicant's motivation letter.</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Bachelor of Social Sciences in Communication Science</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Rīga Stradiņš University	RĪGA	DZIRCIEMA IELA 16, KURZEMES RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1007
Liepāja branch of Rīga Stradiņš University	LIEPĀJA	RIŅĶU IELA 24/26, LIEPĀJA, LV-3405

Part time studies - 4 years - latvian

Study type and form	<i>Part time studies</i>
Duration in full years	<i>4</i>
Duration in month	<i>0</i>
Language	<i>latvian</i>
Amount (CP)	<i>120</i>
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Secondary education; CE certificate in Latvian; CE certificate in Mathematics, CE certificate in a foreign language or an examination document of an international testing institution. For foreign applicants • Completed secondary education attested by originals or certified copies of the secondary education diploma and official transcript. • Final/Last secondary school semester and exam grades included in the secondary school leaving diploma and the official transcript in compulsory subjects – mathematics, English (results of the internationally recognised English test are also allowed for submission). Should the management of the study programme decide to offer the study programme in English medium to international applicants, additional compulsory subjects can be added to the ones mentioned above. (Unsatisfactory grades are not admissible in any of the subjects included in the diploma and the official transcript (in conformity with the secondary education grading scale of the respective country)). • Two recommendation letters. • Applicant's motivation letter.</i>

Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Bachelor of Social Sciences in Communication Science</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Rīga Stradiņš University	RĪGA	DZIRCIEMA IELA 16, KURZEMES RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1007
Liepāja branch of Rīga Stradiņš University	LIEPĀJA	RIŅĶU IELA 24/26, LIEPĀJA, LV-3405

Part time studies - 4 years - english

Study type and form	<i>Part time studies</i>
Duration in full years	<i>4</i>
Duration in month	<i>0</i>
Language	<i>english</i>
Amount (CP)	<i>120</i>
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Secondary education; CE certificate in Latvian; CE certificate in Mathematics, CE certificate in a foreign language or an examination document of an international testing institution. For foreign applicants • Completed secondary education attested by originals or certified copies of the secondary education diploma and official transcript. • Final/Last secondary school semester and exam grades included in the secondary school leaving diploma and the official transcript in compulsory subjects – mathematics, English (results of the internationally recognised English test are also allowed for submission). Should the management of the study programme decide to offer the study programme in English medium to international applicants, additional compulsory subjects can be added to the ones mentioned above. (Unsatisfactory grades are not admissible in any of the subjects included in the diploma and the official transcript (in conformity with the secondary education grading scale of the respective country)). • Two recommendation letters. • Applicant's motivation letter.</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Bachelor of Social Sciences in Communication Science</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Rīga Stradiņš University	RĪGA	DZIRCIEMA IELA 16, KURZEMES RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1007
Liepāja branch of Rīga Stradiņš University	LIEPĀJA	RIŅĶU IELA 24/26, LIEPĀJA, LV-3405

Full time studies - 3 years - english

Study type and form	<i>Full time studies</i>
Duration in full years	<i>3</i>

Duration in month	0
Language	english
Amount (CP)	120
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Secondary education; CE certificate in Latvian; CE certificate in Mathematics, CE certificate in a foreign language or an examination document of an international testing institution. For foreign applicants • Completed secondary education attested by originals or certified copies of the secondary education diploma and official transcript. • Final/Last secondary school semester and exam grades included in the secondary school leaving diploma and the official transcript in compulsory subjects – mathematics, English (results of the internationally recognised English test are also allowed for submission). Should the management of the study programme decide to offer the study programme in English medium to international applicants, additional compulsory subjects can be added to the ones mentioned above. (Unsatisfactory grades are not admissible in any of the subjects included in the diploma and the official transcript (in conformity with the secondary education grading scale of the respective country)). • Two recommendation letters. • Applicant's motivation letter.</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Bachelor of Social Sciences in Communication Science</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Rīga Stradiņš University	RĪGA	DZIRCIEMA IELA 16, KURZEMES RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1007
Liepāja branch of Rīga Stradiņš University	LIEPĀJA	RIŅĶU IELA 24/26, LIEPĀJA, LV-3405

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme)

1.1. Description and analysis of changes in study programme parameters that have taken place since the issue of the previous accreditation certificate of study direction or the license of study programme if study programme is not included in the accreditation page of the study direction

Nr.	Parameter	Analysis of changes
1.	Study direction	—
2.	Name of the study programme	—
3.	Code of the study programme in accordance with the Latvian Education Classification	—
4.	Director of the study programme	—
5.	Scientific degree of the head of the study programme	—
6.	Aim of the study programme	Changes have not been made. Taking into account the fact that the initial aim of the study programme is still sufficiently topical and formulated in conformity with current tendencies and transformations of the fields of communication and photography, it remains unchanged. In total, the aim of the study programme reflects a modern view on the use of photography as a medium in communication.

Nr.	Parameter	Analysis of changes
7.	Objectives of the study programme	<p>The objectives of the study programme have been updated taking into account changes in the development of the study programme and the quality of students' previously acquired education. Taking into account the fact that upon the commencement of studies, students' foreign language and Latvian proficiency is much better, no emphasis has been put on the acquisition of languages anymore. Objective 11 has been removed from the package of the licencing documents due to duplication with other objectives of the new programme description.</p>
8.	Learning outcomes to be achieved	<p>Annex 18.1 reflects the information on the analysis of learning outcomes carried out during mapping. Learning outcomes have been updated to reflect the current essence of the study programme more accurately and testify to the conformity of the study programme to the requirements of the 6th level of LQF/EQF and current trends in the fields of communication and information sciences.</p>
9.	Final examination upon the completion of the study programme	—
10.	Form and type of the study programme	—
11.	Duration of the study programme	—
12.	Language in which the study programme is implemented	<p>During the course of accreditation, it is intended to include English as a language of instruction, although there are currently no specific plans to start offering studies in English. However, such an opportunity will be discussed and possibly implemented in future.</p>
13.	Amount of the study programme (CP, preferably also ECTS)	—

Nr.	Parameter	Analysis of changes
14.	Admission requirements	—
15.	The degree, to be awarded	
16.	The professional qualification to be awarded	—
17.	Place of implementation	So far, the study programme has only been implemented in Riga, but in accordance with the plan for the development of the study direction (see Annex 4.1) it is planned to establish a working group to evaluate the possibilities for implementation of study programmes and to model their implementation plan at RSU Liepaja branch. The material and technical facilities of the branch and RSU as a whole are adequate for its implementation.

1.2. Analysis and assessment of the statistical data on the students of the respective study programme, the dynamics of the number of the students, and the factors affecting the changes to the number of the students. The analysis shall be broken down in the different study forms, types, and languages.

A total number of students is stable without significant changes to the number of full-time and part-time students. It is complicated to obtain statistically significant data on factors determining the change to the number of students, as often true reasons for quitting the studies remain unknown. Although RSU has developed a quality student survey system and the university maintains close contacts with the students, still peculiarities of modern lifestyle determine students' approach towards study process. A significant number of students are employers or self-employed persons even during their first years of studies that, of course, has an impact on their capacity to fully participate in the study process.

A total number of full-time students is stable. Poor academic performance and quitting studies at their own initiative are the main factors determine the number of students (see Annex 16). Quitting the studies at their own initiative is among the most significant factors that often might be associated with the change of the students' financial situation, job or place of residence. However, numbers with regard to the factors leading to the quitting the studies differ significantly each year. This most likely points to the combination of several random factors determining the students' choice. The average drop-out rate is 30%, however, there is a tendency for the total number of

students to become stable and slightly grow.

The main factors determining the number of part-time students are poor academic performance and quitting the studies at students own initiative (see Annex 16). Similarly to full-time studies, quitting the studies at their own initiative is among the most significant factors that often might be associated with the change of the students' financial situation, job or place of residence. However, numbers with regard to the factors leading to the quitting the studies differ significantly each year. This most likely points to the combination of several random factors determining the students' choice. The average drop-out rate is 30%, however, there is a tendency for the total number of students to become stable and slightly grow.

See Annex 16 for statistical data on students during the reporting period.

1.3. Analysis and assessment of the interrelation between the name of the study programme, the degree or professional qualification to be acquired or the degree and professional qualification to be acquired, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and the admission requirements.

The topicality of academic Bachelor's study programme "Photography" of the Faculty of Communication (hereinafter referred to as the FoC) of Rīga Stradiņš University (hereinafter referred to as RSU) and its relevance to the contemporary needs of Latvian society is determined by the structural changes of the last decades in Latvian society after 1991, after the country became an equal member of the Western media, communication and culture space, as well as radical changes in the use of photographic media in research, the press, art, business and everyday life. Continuous transformations of the theoretical and technological aspects of photographic media have influenced the habits of acquiring photos, the availability of photos in public and private space, the circulation of photos between individuals and businesses, and archiving of photos at all levels of use. The modern Latvian labour market in the field of communication is based on a high level of academic knowledge of representation and visibility issues, competencies in decoding and constructing messages in photographic media, skills in evaluating and advising on photographic media and creatively using photographic media as a research tool for academic and business purposes.

Nowadays, the essence of photographic media is determined by the many fields that use photography as a content and a way of communication in social media, informative illustrative image in visual communication, commercial product in business and entertainment industry, documentary evidence in media and scientific research, exclusive piece of design and art. These contemporary trends indirectly make photography a metamedia the use of which determines and influences the successful functioning of many other sectors of the economy. These and other circumstances justify the need to train highly qualified, competent, and competitive communication professionals with contemporary education in the field of photography in Latvia who are able to work professionally and competently with diverse aspects of photography use in communication projects, using various possibilities of photographic media in art, online media, mass media, cultural and entertainment management, as well as to implement photo opportunities in advertising, public relations projects and various business areas in Latvia and other European Union countries.

Not only has the media system changed completely in Latvia since the beginning of the millennium, but also drastic changes have affected the operating principles, ethics, professional and technological practices of printed media, publishers, the Internet, other photography-related areas of business, plus the behaviour, lifestyles, information receiving habits, and other aspects of the

audience have also changed. Not only technological capabilities and their usage patterns have changed, but even the language and terminology used to describe processes in the industry.

Many areas of public life are confronted with the opportunities and challenges posed by the new market conditions, and the structural transformations of photographic media created by technology. In many areas of business, the use of photography is commonplace, as many business or government-driven processes require competencies in creative thinking, photographic image decoding, reading, interpretation, and production, as well as competencies that facilitate access to photography and meaningful use of photography in the rapidly changing new media environment. The spread of new media has contributed to the overlapping of different sectors of the economy, affecting and changing the public perception of entertainment, employment, private and public aspects, which is directly related to the distribution and use of photos for everyday and professional purposes.

The lecturers of RSU Faculty of Communication regularly come across information provided by entrepreneurs, public sector representatives, media organisations, publishers, photo agencies, advertising and public relations staff that Latvia needs specialists in the field of photography who are equally competent academically and professionally. Although photography in Latvia is a medium widely used in the academic and public space, there is still no higher education study programme in Latvia that focuses on the mastering of photographic media. It should be noted that in Western countries, where the art market is well developed, mastering of the photographic media traditionally takes place within the art sector. However, photographic media in Latvia has not successfully integrated into the art sector (there are no photo collections, auctions and no funding for photography). The peculiarities of the development of photographic media in the Latvian cultural context and the aforementioned factors determine that the mastering of photographic media will be more successful within the framework of communication science, providing a broader set of academic and applied knowledge, skills and competence to future communication professionals.

With reference to the development of technology, creative industries and the knowledge society in the EU and globally, it should be emphasised that globalisation also sets new trends and overarching goals in the communication and photography industries:

- to develop the understanding of the communication industry regarding the use of photography, innovative technologies and the latest trends in the theory and practice of photography, including the use of the latest theories and technologies in communication education;
- to form a modern and effective study system on photographic media, improving professionalism and academic competences;
- to develop research of photography as a communication industry and to develop meaningful links with the professional usage sphere of photographic media, fostering understanding and critical view of dynamically changing aspects and contexts of photography use in the public and private sectors;
- to promote the continuous renewal of the academic staff and research tradition and to ensure sustainable development of communication education, while respecting the development trends in the creative industries and technologies and the needs of the knowledge society.

The uniqueness and sustainability of the programme have been coded into one of its key priorities - to provide a synthesis of academic and professional knowledge and competence in the field of photography, based on continuous academic development of the teaching staff and the involvement of professionals in the field of photography.

Within the framework of the programme, it is planned to train specialists for the Latvian and European Union professional labour market and academic environment of communication and photography, which will ensure both research activities and study process quality.

This is currently the only study programme of its kind in Latvia the content of which combines understanding of communication processes, knowledge and competence on professional use of photographic media and the peculiarities of photo media management.

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof)

2.1. Assessment of the relevance of the content of the study course/ module and the compliance with the needs of the relevant industry and labour market and with the trends in science. Provide information on how and whether the content of the study course/ module is updated in line with the development trends of the relevant industry, labour market, and science. In case of master's and doctoral study programmes, specify and provide the justification as to whether the degrees are awarded in view of the developments and findings in the field of science or artistic creation.

The academic Bachelor's study programme "Photography" provides general courses in the social sciences including **the guidelines, principles, structure and methodology of the respective field** (introduction to communication theories, communication law and ethics, history of communication, photography as communication, mass communication theories, etc.). In total, the study courses providing the abovementioned knowledge, skills and competence are included in the compulsory part or part A of the study programme and comprise 65 CP.

Courses providing general and specialised knowledge in the **history and current issues** of photographic media (introduction to the studies and speciality, history of ideas of photography, visual anthropology, creative photography, photography in contemporary art, advertising photography, history of photography in Latvia, studio photography, applied photography, documentary photography and photojournalism, photography and design, psychology of communication, communication law and ethics, digital display, producer's work, fundamentals of editing, etc.), which are included in part B and comprise 51 CP. This section includes study courses that reveal the characterisation of photographic media as a branch or sub-branch of communication science and problems in a cross-disciplinary perspective, such as visual anthropology, photography in contemporary art, production work, animation, video and other types of audiovisual media, communication law and ethics, electronic media formats and archives, etc.

The study process also supports and ensures the development of students' research competences by offering courses in qualitative and quantitative research methods (social research methods, qualitative research methods, seminar of Bachelor's thesis, etc.). Research skills and abilities are also improved in the process of development of one final paper (4 CP), one course paper (4 CP) and Bachelor's thesis (20 CP). Together these papers amount to 28 CP.

Elective study courses constitute 4 CP.

According to the regulations on the national standard of academic education, "Civil Defence and

Environmental Protection” is included as a compulsory course (2 CP). As well as in accordance with the regulations of the national standard of academic education, the amount of contact hours in the study programme is not less than 40% of the amount of Bachelor’s study programme (except for the amount intended for the placement and Bachelor’s thesis).

The Bachelor’s study programme “Photography” is designed with cross-curricular content links in mind, ensuring continuity in the curriculum. Of particular importance in the study programme is the students’ independent work, as well as the versatile improvement of knowledge and skills, and consequently the evaluation system, which facilitates intensive research work throughout the studies and ends with the development and defence of the Bachelor’s thesis. Alongside the development of research skills, the emphasis of the study programme is on the acquisition and improvement of professional skills and competence in photography, promoted through the acquisition of academic study content in the context of good practice, practical research and production projects, collaborating with specific companies in the photography industry during the study placement.

The content of the study programme is regularly updated taking into account the current events in the field of communication science and photographic media, the peculiarities of the media market and contemporary trends of communication services. Visiting lecturers and experts from the photography, media and communication sectors are regularly involved in the study process. The content of the study courses is developed taking into consideration the opinion of the placement cooperation companies on the quality and content of studies, as well as student assessments of the study process and the quality of specific study courses; for example, Student Media (www.skalak.rsu.lv) has been created to bring placement in the media environment closer to the study environment, which functions as a simulation-based learning environment, where each student is required to master the specifics of media communication, editorial work, basic journalism and to gain simulated editorial experience working in groups and individually on media story production.

2.2. Assessment of the interrelation between the information included in the study courses/ modules, the intended learning outcomes, the set aims and other indicators, the relation between the aims of the study course/ module and the aims and intended outcomes of the study programme. In case of a doctoral study programme, provide a description of the main research roadmaps and the impact of the study programme on research and other education levels.

The aims and intended outcomes of the study courses are closely related to the overall aims and intended outcomes of the study programme. Study course content planning is regularly collectively evaluated (at department meetings), re-planned and updated taking into account the programme development vision and current events in the field of communication.

The aims to be achieved and outcomes of the study programme are based on the knowledge, skills and competence acquired in the study courses. Outcomes of the study programme are achieved:

1. Thanks to the involvement of **high-level teaching staff** who are either professors in the field of communication and are experts in the theoretical aspects of the field or practitioners in the field of communication and photography. For example, visiting lecturer Arnis Balčus (editor of “FK” magazine, commissioner of Riga Photo Festival), Assistant Professor Alnis Stakle (editor of photo books, curator of Riga Photo Festival), Assistant Professor Dita

Rietuma (director of the National Film Centre, film critic), Professor Sergejs Kruks (semiotician, expert in media and culture), Professor Anda Rožukalne (expert in journalism, media literacy and media politics);

2. The link **between the study programme and the business environment** is achieved because it is obligatory during the studies to complete a placement (6 CP) in a study content related company, which is the media, communication agencies, various public and private companies (Delfi, Tvnet, LSM, MRS group, Vides filmu studija, MTG, Latvian National Museum of Art, etc.) that require experts in static imagery;
3. **The simulation-based learning environment** provides invaluable support in the acquisition of the students' practical competence needed to produce visual and verbal stories in the mass media environment. In order to create the simulation-based study environment required for the study programme, student media has been created (<http://skalak.rsu.lv/>). Each academic year, students practice in the student media for at least 2 CP, getting insight into editorial work, group work on journalism projects, photojournalism production skills, and critical skills through peer review.
4. **Acquisition of academic and applied skills** is mutually balanced in the curriculum, including both the development of research competences and the acquisition of applied audiovisual production skills. In the first year of studies, students write a final paper (4 CP), which must be completed with an applied product (photo story, short film, radio broadcast, website development, etc.). In the second year of studies, students write a course paper (4 CP), which must be done as an empirical study, while in the third year of studies students write a bachelor thesis (20 CP), where they can select the academic and applied direction.

The study programme "Photography" is based on the current issues and problems of the public communication and photography industry in Latvia, the need for educational innovations, national development strategies and cultural policy tasks, labour market development perspectives in the context of European Union and Latvian society development. The topicality of the study programme is determined by several factors closely related to the development of the social, political, cultural and economic environment in Latvia:

- the crucial role of different levels and types of communication and image exchange processes in promoting civil and democratic society in Latvia;
- development and popularity of new digital imaging, image exchange and information and communication technologies;
- the emergence of technology-based virtual communities and innovative image acquisition mechanisms, unprecedented image exchange channels, and image storage strategies that define the peculiarities of the evolution of communication environment, which require professionals capable of competently and responsibly employing various communication techniques, approaches and tools in the field of photography;
- the international nature of the business and cultural environment affected by the availability and diffusion of technology;
- the overlap and convergence of social networks, mass communication and educational processes, resulting in a change in the visual communication structure of the mediated society;
- the use of photography in business, education, art and culture, everyday life and in other areas of public activity;
- challenges of the knowledge society in the context of social issues, cultural development and education;
- the special importance of mass communication and photography in shaping the values

orientation of young people today;

- the role of photography in communication processes and their relation with the internal market and the promotion of business, etc.

Accenting that processes in the information society in all areas of life rely heavily on transformations in communication processes, and that the lack of education, knowledge and information on the use of photography and static images in communication deepens social, political, and economic problems in Latvia, the study programme “Photography” is designed to offer innovative, holistic and in-depth study content improving theoretical and practical skills relevant to current trends in communication and photography in Europe and globally, as well as to educate and create a learning environment for skilled, highly qualified, competent and competitive communication professionals in the field of photography who are ready to work independently and in groups specializing in photographic media in the fields of public relations, journalism, communication research and online media in Latvia and other European Union countries.

2.3. Assessment of the study implementation methods (including the evaluation methods) by providing the analysis of how the study implementation methods (including the evaluation methods) used in the study courses/ modules are selected, what they are, and how they contribute to the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study courses and the aims of the study programme. Provide an explanation of how the student-centred principles are taken into account in the implementation of the study process.

Study process is implemented mostly as interactive lectures, practical interactive classes or seminars and independent work of students. All advanced technologies available at RSU are used in both lectures and classes.

During their studies at RSU, students can ask questions they are interested in, discuss them with the lecturer and fellow students. Problem-centred teaching strategies are used for studies. All additional study materials are freely available to the students in the e-studies environment. It also provides references to additional information sources for studying the specific issues, as well as materials for self-guided learning (for example, practical assignments that can be done at home with self-assessment algorithm).

Both formative and summative evaluation is used in the studies. Formative evaluation takes place during everyday study process: by asking control questions to the students during the contact lessons, as well as by discussing the independent works of students that are practised during the study process. Summative evaluation takes place at the conclusion of each study course as a test or examination. Summative evaluation tests are organised in a written form (in paper format or electronically) or as oral discussions. At the conclusion of studies, the student selects a topic they are interested in and writes and defends a Bachelor's thesis in cooperation with the selected supervisor.

As already mentioned, by the end of each academic year, students are asked to complete the evaluation survey in the RSU e-environment, where they can express their opinion and provide proposals both regarding the content of the study course and the methods of implementation thereof, as well as the competence and work style of the lecturers. Therefore, study courses are updated each year in accordance with the evaluation given by the students. Student

representatives are also involved in faculty councils ensuring representation of their opinion in decision-making.

In general, RSU practises student-centred education, providing that:

- an independently learning student is at the centre of the study process;
- learning outcomes are clearly formulated and known, and the student studies to achieve them;
- students know and understand the intended learning outcomes of the study programme or course;
- evaluation of the student's achievements is formed in a way that it is possible to check whether and at what level the planned learning outcomes have been achieved;
- task of the teaching staff is to facilitate the study process of the student so that the student achieves the set learning outcomes;
- it can be observed that aggregate of outcomes of separate study courses forms the learning outcomes of the study programme.

Learning outcomes of the study programme are formulated in a student-centred way and they:

- establish a unified understanding of students and teaching staff regarding of what is expected from the student at the end of the course or the programme;
- provide the students with an opportunity to study more effectively, i.e., students clearly know what knowledge and skills they will obtain if they successfully complete the respective course. The students can also track what they have learned already and what they still need to learn, and what is their progress towards achieving the outcomes of the programme;
- present a tool for the teaching staff to be able to organise the study process more effectively: lectures, seminars, group work, discussions, laboratory work, etc., selecting topics and materials, as well as teaching strategies in accordance with the learning outcomes set for the study course or study programme;
- create a mutual understanding between the teaching staff and colleagues regarding for achievement of which learning outcome the course is studied, and the respective learning method is selected;
- identify the areas where certain types of learning outcomes overlap or lack (by comparing courses and compliance thereof with the programme);
- aid the students in selecting, which courses to study in accordance with the learning outcomes the student wishes to achieve;
- provide clear information for employers on the knowledge and skills the students have acquired, as well as provide an opportunity to assess this knowledge and skills in accordance with the defined professional qualification.

The study implementation and evaluation methods applied contribute to the achievement of the study course results and the aim set for the study programme.

The creation of the study programme, the study process and the preparation of documentation for accreditation have been in line with Section 1(8) of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (1 CP corresponds to 40 academic hours of work (one week of studies)). Paragraph 9 of the Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No. 240 "Regulations on the National Standard of Academic Education" provides that contact hours make up no less than 40% of a Bachelor's study programme in full-time studies (except for the amount intended for placement and writing of the Bachelor's thesis).

Full-time programme					
Semester	Credit points				Contact hours per CP
	A	B	C	Total	Total
1	12	8	0	20	43%
2	11	7	2	20	39%
3	2	16	2	20	40%
4	12	8	0	20	42%
5	8	12	0	20	36%
6	20	0	0	20	
Total:	65	51	4	120	40%

In full-time (FT) planning, the amount of contact hours makes 40% of the study programme.

In order to enrich the content of the study programme, in addition to contact hours in the form of lectures and seminars several other education format are implemented, which provide students with experience related to the photography communication industry. In accordance with aims of the study programme students are involved in different events outside the university, the content of which affects the communication industry, media, photography and visual culture in general. Different activities ensuring communication with experts of the photography and communication industry, events and companies are planned within each study course:

1. **Participation in the RSU Research Week** is mandatory for all students, which includes attendance of RSU international conference events, lectures, discussions and workshops. After attendance of sessions, students contemplate on the obtained knowledge in home assignments and independent work, reflecting the latest scientific and practical developments in trends of the communication industry;
2. The amount of **individual consultations** within each study course varies and is related to the amount of the study course in CP, the complexity of content and the opinions expressed in interviews of students of the course. During individual consultations topical matters from study course lectures, independent work and home assignments, latest literature are discussed;
3. **Visits to companies and visiting lectures of communication experts.** Every year students attend several communication companies and media (LSM, SIA *Fineartprint*, *Delfi*, etc.) or also meet representatives of companies during specifically organised visiting lectures. Every year there are also unscheduled visiting lectures of artists, *Erasmus* teachers, professors from foreign universities and politicians, which are offered by different embassies, companies, art and cultural festivals;
4. Topical events in the photography sector. "Riga Photography Biennial" and the Photo Festival "Riga Photomonth" are two main annual events, which together provide a broad general picture of the photography sector and include about 30 exhibitions, lectures of international

experts, seminars and workshops. The study process includes academic and artistic activities of these events. Attendance of these events enables students not only to learn about latest news in the theory of photography, but also to see the material nature of photography.

Students contemplate on the ideas learned at **visiting lectures** in home assignments and independent work. Individual consultations in each study course after each covered topic promote individual approach with regard to each student and with regard to profound understanding of photography and the communication industry. **Individual consultations** are organised immediately after the class in an auditorium (lecture or seminar) or department, upon individual agreement, or, taking into account experience, also by phone and e-mail, contacting about different matters related to the course content and individual studies.

For more detailed planned distribution of contact hours beyond lectures and seminars see the tables.

Additional contact hours in compulsory courses

Learning activities	Semester	Contact hours
Individual consultations	1	34
Individual consultations	2	30
Individual consultations	3	6
Individual consultations	4	16
Individual consultations	5	22
Research Week	1	20
Visit to a company	2	25
Visiting lecture of communication experts	4	8
Visit to a company	4	25
Visiting lecture of communication experts	4	8
Topical events in the photography sector	2	15
Topical events in the photography sector	4	15

Topical events in the photography sector	6	15
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Study process for part-time regular studies takes place on Saturdays in conformity with current semester schedule and the number of contact hours that has been precisely indicated in study course descriptions (Annex 20). Aims, objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme are identical to those of regular studies. The duration of part-time studies is longer, i.e., 4 years of studies, the student has to acquire at least 15 CP per each semester. The amount of credit points obtained for study courses, final paper, semester paper, placement and Bachelor's thesis is identical to the amount to be obtained during full-time studies. In addition to academic staff, support staff, IT Department, RSU Library provides quality study process to part-time students by ensuring their services also on Saturdays. Lecturers are available for consultations held also on Saturdays.

2.4. If the study programme entails a traineeship, provide the analysis and assessment of the relation between the tasks of the traineeship included in the study programme and the learning outcomes of the study programme. Specify how the higher education institution/ college supports the students within the study programme regarding the fulfilment of the tasks set for students during the traineeship.

The following organisations and structures are used for the placement: advertising and public relations agencies, event agencies, advertising, public relations and communications departments in various organizations, Internet media, digital platforms for broadcasting and printed media, producer groups and studios of various media formats, online project creators, creators of art and communication projects.

Placement objectives: participating in the implementation of various communication projects, performing tasks related to planning, creating, maintaining photography and media communication (e.g. ensuring media or organisation communication on social networks, creating photo, video and audio content, creating and developing internet media, designing and developing online projects and formats, analysing and monitoring various aspects of communication; creating intranet content for different organisations, providing photography and multimedia communication for art, sports, festival and other projects, and other photography and multimedia communication related tasks).

The placement objectives are designed in accordance with the intended outcomes of the study programme. Students need to know how photography can be used and is used in advertising, art, journalism, research, public relations, the entertainment industry, the Internet. Understanding the use of photography in business is achieved during the placement as students learn the work of a photographic media expert in a company.

See Annex No. 9.1 with a description of the students' placement organisation.

See Annex No. 9.2 with information on contracts and other confirmations about the provision of student placements in companies.

2.5. Analysis and assessment of the topics of the final theses of the students, their relevance in the respective field, including the labour market, and the evaluations of the

final theses.

During the studies, students write and defend their Bachelor's thesis. The topic of the Bachelor's thesis can be planned both as an empirical study and as a creative project in photography. Criteria for creative Bachelor's theses also include a high-level theoretical part, but instead of an empirical study, students develop a project in photography (commercial photography, author photography, or photojournalism). For the time being, it is not possible to draw conclusions about the trends of the Bachelor's theses defended, as the number of students and graduates is not large enough to produce meaningful statistics, but the main thematic directions that outline the work of the graduates are:

- projects in author photography, such as the Bachelor's thesis "Mediatized Performance in Photography" (2019), where the author focused on research into performance and photography as a recording medium to auto-ethnographically discuss the fight against depression. The thesis later culminated in an exhibition and is an excellent entry of the author in the field of art photography;
- visual culture studies, for example, the Bachelor's thesis "American Students' Perception of the "American Dream" in the 21st Century: Visual Narrative Analysis" (2017) was both an academic study and a series of photographs in 30 states of the USA. Later, the works were both published in several international magazines and exhibited;
- studies of visual culture on the links and connotations of static and moving images in culture, such as the Bachelor's thesis "The Interaction of Photographic and Cinematic Languages in the Art of Photographer Gregory Crewdson" (2017);
- media content analysis, such as the Bachelor's thesis "Beyond the Fence: An Analysis of Asylum Seekers' Visual Representation in "Latvijas Avīze" and "Vesti Segodņa" in 2015 and 2016", which focuses on media portrayals of what people find unfamiliar and illustrates current media agenda, as well as relates to the current topics in communication research.

The majority of final papers (90%) have been graded over 8 (very good). Such an assessment is associated with several factors. Before the submission of the final copy of the Bachelor's thesis students are obliged to consult their supervisor and submit an almost finalised version of the paper for pre-defence that takes place within the frame of the student conference. It ensures meeting high-quality standards. Unfortunately, in several cases, this results in students' drop-out or postponing the defence of the final paper to another year. The submitted Bachelor's theses (See Annex 22.) have always been reviewed and electronically checked for plagiarism. If the supervisor of the Bachelor's thesis refuse to sign the submitted thesis (the student has failed to cooperate with the supervisor and has not observed the criteria for thesis development), two reviewers have been assigned for the paper by thus ensuring a more in-depth review.

Table on compliance of the study programme with the State Education Standard in Annex 17.1.

Mapping of the study courses for the achievement of learning outcomes of the study programme in Annex 18.1.

Curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme) in Annex 19.

Descriptions of the study courses of the study programme in Annex 20.

2.6. Analysis and assessment of the outcomes of the surveys conducted among the

students, graduates, and employers, and the use of these outcomes for the improvement of the content and quality of studies by providing the respective examples.

Student survey at the end of the study course is organised in accordance with the procedure defined by RSU:

- for each study course in the e-studies, students complete a study course evaluation questionnaire, where they can express their opinion and proposals both regarding the content of the study course and its implementation methods, competences and work style of lecturers;
- upon completion of studies, they evaluate the study programme in general by completing a survey regarding the study programme;
- views of RSU alumni are identified and implemented primarily by the heads of the study programmes. In 2017, in order to improve the obtaining of graduate feedback, RSU Alumni Association in cooperation with RSU Department of Studies and RSU Centre for Educational Growth developed a unified questionnaire for graduates, which was published on [lv](#) in autumn 2019.

Once a year, the results of the study course survey and study programme survey are analysed. Results are reviewed at the meeting of departments, faculty councils, Study Quality Councils and Dean's Council, and as an aggregate are reflected in the mentioned annual report. Therefore, study courses are updated each year in accordance with the evaluation given by the students. Student representatives are also involved in faculty councils ensuring representation of their opinion in decision-making processes.

Student surveys are conducted after each study course, evaluating the course content, organisation and lecturer's work. In general, the course evaluations are very good. However, there are study courses that have not been evaluated enough for the data to be considered as reliable. Discussions with students in person about the involvement of students in the evaluation of study courses reveal a tendency that the study courses, the content and form of implementation of which are more satisfactory to the students, are less evaluated. If there are any organisational and content shortcomings in the study course, such study courses are more actively evaluated. For example, students of the programme of academic year 2017/2018 highlighted a number of organisational shortcomings in the study courses "History of Ideas of Photography" and "Student Media". Since the organisational problems could not be solved quickly enough, the lecturers of both study courses were replaced. Now, student satisfaction with the quality of the aforementioned study courses is much higher.

According to the survey results, students of the Bachelor's study programme are generally satisfied with the quality of studies. Survey data has also influenced the overall development of the study programme, as students have regularly expressed their desire for more practical tasks, which has led to including a guest lecture in almost every study course with an expert from the business world or a company visit, for example, visiting photo studios, museums, galleries, exhibition design service providers, communication agencies.

The employer survey is implemented by including specific questions to the employer in the placement report, which must be filled in and submitted to the placement supervisor at the Department of Communication Studies after completing the placement. Employers are also personally invited to give their opinion on cooperation with students of the Department of

Communication Studies to the study programme leader. The following are summarised and analysed views of employers / placement providers about students on the basis of the questionnaire.

1. What kind of knowledge or skills do you think students lacked in their placement assignments? What should be the focus in the training process?

Most employers (95%) respond that the students are excellent at their duties and ready for real-life work situations, are capable of individual and group tasks in communication, photo production, image evaluation, project management and media content development. Employers also emphasise the ability of students to take responsibility and be ethically correct according to the criteria of the communication industry. In some cases (5%) it has been pointed out (these data refer to 2013-2014) that students lack practical skills to work with video and audio post-production software. Many courses now include study content that provides the necessary skills to work with sound, static and moving images in Adobe CC software, and in recent years there has been no employer indication that students are not proficient in Adobe CC software.

2. What would you recommend to improve / change in the student placement organisation?

In most cases (85%) employers do not consider that anything should be changed in the organisation of student placements, but there are sometimes some comments (10%) that student placements should be longer, as this would help students to integrate more closely in the process of their chosen profession. The volume of placement is currently 6 CP. The possibility of increasing the volume of placement is not being considered yet. It should be noted that the study course "Student Media" has been developed that provides a simulation-based learning process and provides an experience that is close to real media activity.

2.7. Provide the assessment of the options of the incoming and outgoing mobility of the students, the dynamics of the number of the used opportunities, and the recognition of the study courses acquired during the mobility.

RSU implements Erasmus+ programme mobility activity among the countries participating in the programme. In total, more than 150 bilateral cooperation agreements have been signed, providing mobility of students and staff in all cycles of studies: during Bachelor's, Master's, and doctoral studies. Partnering universities are selected on the basis of available information on equal study programmes and conditions of the training language. One of the main conditions is the alignment of the study courses during the student exchange programme in order to be able to recognise study sources and add them to the diploma supplement of the respective RSU study programme. Thus, a complete study process is ensured, supplemented by experience gained abroad.

Students of the "Photography" study programme have not participated in Erasmus+ mobility but have participated in other mobility programmes related to communication and photography studies, for example, in 2018, five students from the study programme participated in the Young Professionals project in Zingst, Germany. The project was based on a workshop lasting several weeks for photography students from three European institutions of higher education, resulting in an exhibition in Zingst, Germany.

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme)

3.1. Assessment of the compliance of the resources and provision (study provision, scientific support (if applicable), informative provision (including libraries), material and technical provision, and financial provision) with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the learning outcomes to be achieved by providing the respective examples. Whilst carrying out the assessment, it is possible to refer to the information provided for in the criteria set forth in Part II, Chapter 3, sub-paragraphs 3.1 to 3.3.

See the description of the study direction (See II. Sections 3.1 to 3.3) for a general description of the resources and facilities, material and technical provision, and financial provision available for RSU study programmes description II. Sections 3.1 to 3.3 of Chapter 3 points.

Multimedia computer room

The workstations, specially adapted for visual post-processing, are provided in the multimedia computer room of the Department of Communication Studies, located at the RSU educational building at Kuldīgas Street 9A. Students use the multimedia computer room both for independent work and during the study courses.

Student media

In order to provide a simulation-based study process, student media “Skaļāk” has been created, which is a compulsory learning content and place of practice for all students of the study programme. The work conditions of students there are close to real media, including work in groups as well as individual assignments for research and creative projects for media.

Photo studio

The photo studio is established to carry out both study assignments and independent work. It is equipped with artificial lights and backgrounds, which allows taking professional photos and videos of people and objects.

Photo and video equipment

Over the last six years, there have been significant investments in photo and video equipment (EUR 60,000) to enable all students to produce professional photo and video stories if they do not have personal photo equipment. Sony donated EUR 10,000 in photo equipment after the study programme was licenced.

3.2. Assessment of the study provision and scientific support, including the resources

provided within the cooperation with other science institutes and institutions of higher education (applicable to the doctoral study programmes).

Not applicable.

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (4. Teaching Staff)

4.1. Analysis and assessment of the changes to the composition of the teaching staff over the reporting period and their impact on the study quality.

The development of the study programme is planned and implemented taking into account the legal framework as well as the specifics of the study programme. There has been little change in the teaching staff since obtaining the study programme license. One lecturer, Klāvs Sedlenieks, has defended his dissertation and received his Ph.D. (Tallinn University, Estonia 2013).

Since the licensing of the study programme, the teaching staff regularly improves their qualification by participating in scientific and artistic projects, participating in conferences and publishing articles in academic journals. The composition of the teaching staff has not changed significantly, but a stronger link has been established with photography and media professionals.

Liaisons with photography professionals are highly valued and they are regularly invited to work with students as visiting lecturers, such as photographer Reinis Hofmanis, experimental film and analogue photography expert Ieva Balode, editor of "FK" magazine and commissioner of the Riga Photo Month Arnis Balčus, head of the Museum of Decorative Arts and Design Inese Baranovska, expert on new media and artist Rasa Šmite, professor Donald Weber of the Royal Academy of Art in the Hague.

31 lecturers are involved in the implementation of the study programme, among them 3 professors, 3 associate professors, 6 assistant professors, 3 lecturers and 16 invited lecturers. 15(48%) lecturers are regular full-time lecturers. 6 experts approved by the Latvian Council of Science (4 in social sciences – media and communication, 1 in social sciences - psychology and 1 in social sciences – sociology and social work) are involved in the implementation of the study programme.

At the beginning of the academic year 2014/2015, 26 lecturers were involved in the implementation of the study programme, 2 of them were professors and 4 associate professors, 1 assistant professor, 6 lecturers, and 13 visiting lecturers. 13 lecturers were regular full-time teaching staff at RSU (50%).

Changes in the composition of the teaching staff are related both to the inclusion of new restricted elective courses in the study programme and to the aim of strengthening the interaction between students and the professionals of the sector.

4.2. Assessment of the compliance of the qualification of the teaching staff members (academic staff members, visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting

docents, visiting lecturers, and visiting assistants) involved in the implementation of the study programme with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the provisions set out in the respective regulatory enactments. Provide information on how the qualification of the teaching staff members contributes to the achievement of the learning outcomes.

Pursuant to Article 55 of the Law on the Institutions of Higher Education, at least five professors and associate professors who have been elected for academic positions at RSU are involved in the implementation of the study programme:

- 1) Professor Anda Rožukalne;
- 2) Professor Sergejs Kruks;
- 3) Professor Deniss Hanovs;
- 4) Associate Professor Ilva Skulte;
- 5) Associate Professor Ritma Rungule;
- 6) Associate Professor Sandra Mihailova.

lecturers or visiting lecturers hold at least Master's degree in a related field of sciences (see Annex 24.7 on the analysis of the composition of academic staff involved in the implementation of the study programme). A majority of lecturers are professionals/practitioners in their field of expertise, for example Prof. Anda Rožukalne (journalist), Assistant Professor Alnis Stakle (photography curator and book publisher), Prof. Sergejs Kruks (journalist), Prof. Deniss Hanovs (journalist), Assoc. Prof. Ilva Skulte (expert of media literacy and cultural journalism), visiting lecturer Arnis Balčus (publisher of journal FK and commissar of Riga Photography Festival), visiting lecturer Ieva Rozentāle (the Head of Cultural Broadcasting at LTV), visiting lecturer Jekaterina Stakle (designer), lecturer Dita Rietuma (director of the National Film Centre), Laine Kristberga (director of Latvian Centre for Performance Art).

See Annex 6.1. Basic information on academic staff involved in the implementation of the study direction and their language skills.

See Annex 6.4. List of academic staff's publications for the reporting period.

See Annex 6.5. Summary of the academic staff's publications, participation in conferences and projects, experience in the field.

Forms of attracting potential students are constantly being improved by providing widely available information about the programme. As one of the plans is to offer studies in English.

In order to make sure of the foreign language skills of the teaching staff implementing study programmes in English, RSU periodically organises a detailed English language proficiency test and, if necessary, additional training. If the study programme is implemented in English, lecturers with at least B2 English knowledge will be involved. See Annex 24.5 for a statement from RSU that the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programmes within the study direction, which is fully or in part implemented in English, have the English proficiency at least at level B2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

4.3. Information on the number of the scientific publications of the academic staff members, involved in the implementation of the doctoral study programme, as published during the reporting period by listing the most significant publications published in

Scopus or WoS CC indexed journals. As for the social sciences, humanitarian sciences, and the science of art, the scientific publications published in ERIH+ indexed journals may be additionally specified (if applicable).

Not applicable.

4.4. Information on the participation of the academic staff, involved in the implementation of the doctoral study programme, in scientific projects as project managers or prime contractors/ subproject managers/ leading researchers by specifying the name of the relevant project, as well as the source and the amount of the funding. Provide information on the reporting period (if applicable).

Not applicable.

4.5. Provide examples of the involvement of the academic staff in the scientific research and/or artistic creation activities both at national and at international level (in the fields related to the content of the study programme), as well as the use of the obtained information in the study process.

Several international projects have simultaneously been implemented at the Faculty of Communication. These projects involve scientific research and discoveries thereof enriches the content of the study course. Below are some of them:

2017 - 2020 Erasmus+ Strategic partnership project: "Media literacy and information literacy. Laboratory of innovative teaching methods", partners: University of Tartu; Vilniaus Universitetas; Uniwersytet Wroclawsky; Göteborgs universitet; National News Agency LETA SIA, National Library of Latvia (project participants: Prof. Anda Rožukalne, Assist. Prof. Alnis Stakle, Assoc. Prof. Ilva Skulte).

<https://www.rsu.lv/projekts/mediju-un-informacijas-pratiba-inovativo-apmacibas-metozu-laboratorija>

The main objectives of the project are the following: the establishment of international and interdisciplinary centre for knowledge exchange, capacity building and competence development, as well as the data base of theoretical and methodological resources in the field of media and information literacy based on the results obtained during practical studies, creative experiments and project development (laboratory concept), identification of the main directions for the development of media and information literacy, structure and form of media and information literacy in society by establishing a study programme based on the obtained knowledge and current ever-changing environment of media and information.

Study courses which include scientific findings gained during the project: Media Audiences, Photography as Communication, Creative Photography, Advertising Photography, Visual Anthropology, Media Critics and Analysis, Cultural Journalism, History of Communication, Introduction to Communication Theories, Mass Communication Theories.

2017 – 2018: Project of the EU Asylum and Migration Fund The development of a responsible, multiform and qualitative journalism in the national and regional mass media of Latvia, facilitating integration of third country nationals in Latvia (No. PMIF/7/2016/1/03) has been implemented in cooperation with the Baltic Centre for Media Excellence (project participants Prof. Anda Rožukalne, Assist. Prof. Alnis Stakle, Assoc. Prof. Ilva Skulte, Prof. Sergejs Kruks, Assist. Prof. Agita Lūse).
<https://www.rsu.lv/projekts/atbildigas-daudzveidigas-un-kvalitativas-zurnalistikas-attistiba-latvijas-nacionalajos-un>

Project results and findings are integrated in the study content in several ways. First, lectures and seminars held within the frame of the project are open for students and incorporated in the curriculum as compulsory events. Second, lecturers involved in the project incorporate scientific findings on the reflection of migration in the media environment in Latvia, editorial strategies and visual communication into their study courses and agenda. Study courses that contain scientific findings of the project: Semiotics, Media Audiences, Photography as Communication, Visual Anthropology, Social Anthropology, Media Critics and Analysis, Mass Communication Theories.

2013 – 2016: “Overcoming the crisis in Latvia: economic, social and communication aspects” RSU ZP 15/2013, (project participants: Prof. Sergejs Kruks, Prof. Anda Rožukalne, Assoc. Prof. Ilva Skulte).

The project analysed the causes of the economic and financial crisis, coping strategies and impact of consequences on households, business activities, social solidarity and discursive practice in Latvia based on theoretical concepts.

<https://www.rsu.lv/projekts/krizes-parvaresana-latvija-ekonomiskie-socialie-un-komunikacijas-aspekti>

Project results and findings were incorporated in the study course Social Anthropology.

2011 – 2019: “The Index of Internet Aggressiveness”, supported by Friedrich Ebert Foundation, (project participants: Prof. Anda Rožukalne, Assoc. Prof. Ilva Skulte, Prof. Sergejs Kruks, Assist. Prof. Agita Lūse, Assist. Prof. Klāvs Sedlenieks). Project outcomes have significantly enriched the understanding of media and communication strategies and tactics of media audiences. Project results and findings were incorporated in the study courses Semiotics, Media Audiences, Photography as Communication, Social Anthropology, Media Critics and Analysis, Mass Communication Strategies.

See the list of academic staff publications in Annex 6.4. and 6.5.

See Annex 24.7 for a confirmation that the academic staff of the study programme complies with the requirements set forth in the third paragraph of Article 55, Paragraph one of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

For more information, see Part II, Paragraph 4 of the study direction description.

4.6. Assessment of the cooperation between the teaching staff members by specifying the mechanisms used to promote the cooperation and ensure the interrelation between the study courses/ modules. Specify also the proportion of the number of the students and the teaching staff within the study programme (at the moment of the submission of the Self-Assessment Report).

RSU ensures regular observation of the work of the teaching staff and the visiting lecturers. The lecturers attend one another's lectures and practical classes, evaluating colleague's class and making recommendations for improving the work of the respective member of academic staff. The results of the student survey are also regularly assessed, taking into account recommendations, suggestions and comments. Taking into account the results of the student survey, adjustments were made to the content of study courses and teaching methods. The observation results and current issues regarding the content of the study courses and the interconnection of the content are regularly discussed at the meetings of RSU Department of Communication Studies, which take place every month, except the summer months.

The entire academic staff is regularly informed about the changes in the study programme planning, new study courses and new visiting lecturers, which allows to coordinate the content of study courses in time and ensure the sustainability of the programme.

For more information, see Part II, Paragraph 3.4–3.6 of the study direction description.

Annexes

III. Description of the Study Programme - 1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme		
Compliance of the joint study programme with the provisions of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (table)		
Statistics on the students over the reporting period	16_pielik_FO_FON_Statistika_eng.pdf	16_pielik_FO_FON_Statistika_lv.pdf
III. Description of the Study Programme - 2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof		
Compliance of the study programme with the State Education Standard	17.1_pielik_Attilst_lzgl_STand_FO_eng.pdf	17.1_pielik_Attilst_lzgl_STand_FO_08012020_lv.pdf
Compliance of the qualification to be acquired upon completion of the study programme with the professional standard (if applicable)		
Compliance of the study programme with the specific regulatory framework applicable to the relevant field (if applicable)		
Mapping of the study courses/ modules for the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study programme	18.1_pielik_StK_St-rezult_kartejums_FO_lv_gatavs_eng.pdf	18.1_pielik_StK_St_rez_kartejums_FO_lv.pdf
Curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme)	19_pielik_FO_planojums_PL-NL_eng.pdf	19_pielik_FO_planojums_PL-NL_lv.pdf
Descriptions of the study courses/ modules	20_pielik_FO_StK_ENG.pdf	20_pielik_FO_StK_LV.pdf
Description of the Study Direction - Other mandatory attachments		
Sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme.	24-1_ABSP_FO_diploms_gatavs_ENG.pdf	24-1_ABSP_FO_diploms_gatavs.pdf
Description of the Study Programme - Other mandatory attachments		
Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college will provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme or at another higher education institution/ college (a contract with another accredited higher education institution/ college), in case the implementation of the study programme is discontinued	24.2_pielikums_Apliecinajums_par_citu_StP_IKZ_parakstits_tulk.pdf	24.2_pielikums_Apliecinajums_par_citu_StP_IKZ_parakstits.pdf
Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college guarantees to the students a compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the higher education institution/ college (actions or failure to act) and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme	24.3_pielikums_Apliecinajums_par_zaudejumiem_IKZ_parakstits_eng.pdf	24.3_pielikums_Apliecinajums_par_zaudejumiem_IKZ_parakstits.pdf
Confirmation of the higher education institution/ college that the teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language according to European language levels (see the levels under www.europass.lv), if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language.	24.5_pielik_Apliecin_anglu_val_StV_IKZ_parakstits_eng.pdf	24.5_pielik_Apliecin_anglu_val_StV_IKZ_parakstits.pdf
If the study programmes in the study direction subject to the assessment are doctoral study programmes, a confirmation that at least five teaching staff members with doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field or sub-field of science, in which the study programme has intended to award a scientific degree.		
If academic study programmes are implemented within the study direction, a document confirming that the academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the provisions set out in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause three of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education	24-7_pielik_apliecinajums_ABSP_Fo_eng.pdf	24-7_pielik_apliecinajums_ABSP_Fo_lv.pdf
Sample (or samples) of the study agreement	24.8_pielik_Studiju_lig_eng.pdf	24.8_pielik_Studiju_lig_lv.pdf
If academic study programmes for less than 250 full-time students are implemented within the study direction, the opinion of the Council for Higher Education shall be attached in compliance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.	24.9_pielik_AIP_atzinums_FO_eng.pdf	24.9_pielik_AIP_atzinums_FO_lv.pdf

Communication Culture and Multimedia

Title of the higher education institution	<i>Information and Communication Sciences</i>
ProcedureStudyProgram.Name	<i>Communication Culture and Multimedia</i>
Education classification code	<i>51321</i>
Type of the study programme	<i>Doctoral study programme</i>
Name of the study programme director	<i>Sergejs</i>
Surname of the study programme director	<i>Kruks</i>
E-mail of the study programme director	<i>sergejs.kruks@rsu.lv</i>
Title of the study programme director	<i>Dr. sc. inf.</i>
Phone of the study programme director	
Goal of the study programme	<i>To prepare highly qualified specialists meeting international requirements in the field of communication science – teaching staff, scientific staff, and professionals in the field of communication, as well as public communicators and opinion leaders. The aim of the programme is to enable multimedia research in Latvia and to take part in international academic and applied research in this field, as well as to develop a methodologically sound basis for research of Latvian and wider East European communication assuming that culture-centred intellectual thought in these communities lays serious emphasis on national culture in the analysis of social processes, which also affects special types of implementation of communication practices. The programme contributes to a wider understanding of the concept of culture, analysing the practice of developing, disseminating, and interpreting communication messages.</i>

Tasks of the study programme	<p><i>The purpose of the programme is to provide doctoral students with the opportunity to study the curriculum and obtain a doctor's degree in communication science with the corresponding professional, academic, and practical skills. During studies doctoral students develop the following skills: to conduct important original scientific research using modern methods of empirical data collection and processing; to collect and interpret the obtained results in classical and modern theoretical paradigms; to present research results at scientific conferences and in publications. Doctoral students improve their knowledge dissemination skills compliant with the lecturer's work in Latvian and foreign higher education institutions, as well as skills to share knowledge on theoretical and practical challenges in communication with industry professionals and their audiences. Programme of fulfilment of the objective:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1) organises study courses and other events with participation of RSU and other university lecturers;</i> <i>2) creates an intellectually stimulating research environment;</i> <i>3) provides doctoral students with access to literature and methodological materials in study courses of the speciality;</i> <i>4) provides doctoral students with access to the databases of empirical studies and the processing thereof in the Statistical Laboratory;</i> <i>5) promotes cooperation between doctoral students by exchanging ideas, knowledge and experience;</i> <i>6) creates an environment for cooperation between doctoral students and cooperation with lecturers at seminars, colloquia, individual consultations, as well as by teaching study courses in Bachelor and Master level programmes;</i> <i>7) provides doctoral students with the opportunity to acquire international experience by participating in conferences, publishing articles in academic journals, as well as by attracting foreign visiting lecturers;</i> <i>8) develops the skills of doctoral students to engage in public discussions on the use of new communication technologies and in the development of relevant policies.</i>
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Results of the study programme	<p><i>Learning outcomes are defined in accordance with the Cabinet Regulations on the Latvian Education Classification No. 322. Knowledge of those qualifying for a doctoral degree covers latest scientific approaches to and insights in communication, quantitative and qualitative research methodology and methods of research in communication science. Future doctors use this knowledge when conducting scientific research and providing critical understanding of communication processes and the relation between culture and communication in Latvia and elsewhere. Skills of those qualifying for a doctoral degree cover oral and written communication on communication science with colleagues and the public without special knowledge. Those who have mastered the study programme have skills in increasing their scientific qualification, implementing scientific projects, gaining internationally recognised achievements, leading research or practical development tasks in media institutions, communication departments of companies, public institutions and private organisations. Graduates of the study programme are competent to solve important research tasks, proposing research ideas, planning, structuring and leading scientific projects of national and international level, and further independently critically analysing, summarising and interpreting the data obtained empirically.</i></p> <p><i>Graduates:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1) are able to conduct significant original scientific research using modern methods of empirical data collection and processing;</i> <i>2) are able to formulate a research problem, plan, implement and lead scientific and practical research, summarise and interpret results;</i> <i>3) are able to present their research in conference proceedings and scientific publications;</i> <i>4) know classical and modern scientific theories of communication and culture, know research methodology in communication science and cultural research;</i> <i>5) are able to increase their scientific qualification, propose research problems, implement and lead scientific and applied research.</i>
Final examination upon the completion of the study programme	<i>Doctoral Examination in Communication Science</i>

Study programme forms

Full time studies - 3 years - latvian

Study type and form	<i>Full time studies</i>
Duration in full years	<i>3</i>
Duration in month	<i>0</i>
Language	<i>latvian</i>
Amount (CP)	<i>120</i>

Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Master's degree or an equivalent diploma of higher education in humanities, social sciences, education or life sciences. Admission of foreign applicants is carried out according to the laws and regulations of the Republic of Latvia. Entrance examinations are organised according to the RSU Rules of Admission to Doctoral Study Programmes. The applicant should formulate the research topic of the doctoral thesis and the nature of the planned research, write an essay of about 2500 words explaining the problem issue being studied, argument the importance of the research, list relevant theoretical literature, offer research methods. The application for a doctoral thesis is evaluated in writing by two RSU or invited specialists in communication science, but the Admission Commission discusses it with the applicant. During studies the doctoral student may modify the topic of research offered at the entrance examination. Taking into account that academic literature in communication science is mainly in English, the studies require good knowledge of English.</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Doctor of Science (Ph.D.) in Mass Media and Communication</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Rīga Stradiņš University	RĪGA	DZIRCIEMA IELA 16, KURZEMES RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1007

Full time studies - 3 years - english

Study type and form	<i>Full time studies</i>
Duration in full years	<i>3</i>
Duration in month	<i>0</i>
Language	<i>english</i>
Amount (CP)	<i>120</i>
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Master's degree or an equivalent diploma of higher education in humanities, social sciences, education or life sciences. Admission of foreign applicants is carried out according to the laws and regulations of the Republic of Latvia. Entrance examinations are organised according to the RSU Rules of Admission to Doctoral Study Programmes. The applicant should formulate the research topic of the doctoral thesis and the nature of the planned research, write an essay of about 2500 words explaining the problem issue being studied, argument the importance of the research, list relevant theoretical literature, offer research methods. The application for a doctoral thesis is evaluated in writing by two RSU or invited specialists in communication science, but the Admission Commission discusses it with the applicant. During studies the doctoral student may modify the topic of research offered at the entrance examination. Taking into account that academic literature in communication science is mainly in English, the studies require good knowledge of English.</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Doctor of Science (Ph.D.) in Mass Media and Communication</i>

Qualification to be obtained (in english)	
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Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Rīga Stradiņš University	RĪGA	DZIRCIEMA IELA 16, KURZEMES RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1007

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme)

1.1. Description and analysis of changes in study programme parameters that have taken place since the issue of the previous accreditation certificate of study direction or the license of study programme if study programme is not included in the accreditation page of the study direction

Nr.	Parameter	Analysis of changes
1.	Study direction	—
2.	Name of the study programme	—
3.	Code of the study programme in accordance with the Latvian Education Classification	—
4.	Director of the study programme	—
5.	Scientific degree of the head of the study programme	—
6.	Aim of the study programme	—
7.	Objectives of the study programme	—
8.	Learning outcomes to be achieved	—
9.	Final examination upon the completion of the study programme	—
10.	Form and type of the study programme	—
11.	Duration of the study programme	—

Nr.	Parameter	Analysis of changes
12.	Language in which the study programme is implemented	—
13.	Amount of the study programme (CP, preferably also ECTS)	—
14.	Admission requirements	—
15.	The degree, to be awarded	Previously - Doctoral degree in Communication Science. Changed on the basis of the Cabinet Regulations No.49 and the decision of the Latvian Council of Science - Doctor of Science (Ph.D.) in Mass Media and Communication
16.	The professional qualification to be awarded	—
17.	Place of implementation	—

1.2. Analysis and assessment of the statistical data on the students of the respective study programme, the dynamics of the number of the students, and the factors affecting the changes to the number of the students. The analysis shall be broken down in the different study forms, types, and languages.

Eight students were admitted in the first year of existence of the doctoral study programme, and two students in the second year. During the studies, 5 students took academic leave (one student during pregnancy and childcare, another for health reasons and three students due to other personal reasons. One student terminated the studies due to personal reasons. In the academic year 2018/2019, three students passed their doctoral examination and successfully completed the study programme. As the programme is relatively new, it is understandable that the number of students is not large. Resources are shared, as far as possible, with other RSU doctoral programmes, thus economically using resources.

Annex 16 provides statistical data on students in the reporting period.

1.3. Analysis and assessment of the interrelation between the name of the study programme, the degree or professional qualification to be acquired or the degree and professional qualification to be acquired, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and the admission requirements.

Veiktā studiju programmas un studiju kursu rezultātu kartēšana ļauj konstatēt, ka studiju programma un studiju kursi atbilst EKI/LKI 8. līmenim un normatīvajos aktos noteiktajām prasībām un nodrošina studentcentrētu pieeju. Studiju kursu rezultāti pārsvarā ir savstarpēji atbilstoši un loģiski saistīti. Studiju programmas nosaukums, iegūstamais grāds, studiju mērķis, uzdevumi un studiju rezultāti ir savstarpēji saistīti.

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof)

2.1. Assessment of the relevance of the content of the study course/ module and the compliance with the needs of the relevant industry and labour market and with the trends in science. Provide information on how and whether the content of the study course/ module is updated in line with the development trends of the relevant industry, labour market, and science. In case of master's and doctoral study programmes, specify and provide the justification as to whether the degrees are awarded in view of the developments and findings in the field of science or artistic creation.

The priorities set out in the national programming documents for the implementation of the European Union's common strategies include the development of doctoral studies as one of the priorities in education, as doctoral studies contribute to the reproduction of the supply of human resources for the successful development of the national economy, increasing competitiveness, contributing to the development of a knowledge-based society. For example, the *Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia* emphasises that it is important not to reduce the base value of human capital and to increase its productivity when the number of people reduces and population ages.

Six semesters (three academic years) are intended for intramural full-time studies to learn the study programme. The amount of the study programme is 120 CP or 180 ECTS. The programme is implemented in the official language.

After the completion of the studies the doctoral student receives a certification of completion of doctoral studies. If the doctoral thesis is defended successfully, the doctoral students obtains a doctoral degree in communication science (*PhD*).

In accordance with the RSU's Rules of Doctoral Studies, a successfully mastered doctoral study programme is the completed theoretical part of education, successfully passed doctoral examinations and the submitted abstract for the doctoral thesis with results or a defended doctoral thesis. After the completion of the studies the doctoral student receives a certification of

completion of doctoral studies. A doctoral student may be enrolled in a doctoral programme for five calendar years that enables him or her to devote more time to the preparation of a doctoral thesis. Having successfully defended a doctoral thesis, the doctoral student obtains a doctoral degree in communication sciences.

Doctoral studies are organised by the RSU Department of Doctoral Studies in accordance with the RSU's Rules of Doctoral Studies. The preparation of a doctoral thesis is the main task of the doctoral student during studies, for which the doctoral student gets the highest number of credit points – 78. The procedure of awarding credit points for scientific research work is the same for all doctoral programmes of RSU. Namely, credit points are awarded for conducting an independent, original scientific research, participation in conferences, preparation of publications, and publishing thereof. The doctoral student conducts this work in co-operation with the supervisor of doctoral thesis and under their supervision. The supervisor of the doctoral thesis advises the doctoral students in matters of academic writing, submission of an article to a journal, reviewing of the article. Starting from the second semester, the doctoral student should report at a seminar every semester about progress in the preparation of the doctoral thesis, as well as participate in discussion of research of other doctoral students. The doctoral student develops an individual plan of the doctoral study programme together with the supervisor of the doctoral thesis for each year of studies and defends it at the end of the current academic year (in September) in front of the commission of the Department of Doctoral Studies. The doctoral student reports to the commission on the fulfilment of the plan at the end of next academic year.

In accordance with the RSU's Rules of Doctoral Studies, a doctoral student may defend a doctoral thesis consisting of academic publications.

Awarding of credit points for scientific research work

<i>Results of the compulsory scientific research work</i>	<i>Credit points</i>
Publication in an internationally reviewed scientific edition or a confirmation of acceptance of an article for publication	30
Publication in a peer-reviewed Latvian scientific edition or a confirmation of acceptance of an article for publication	15
Publication in full text peer-reviewed proceedings of international conferences and congresses (at least 3 pages)	10
Oral/written report on the topic of doctoral thesis at an international congress, conference	10
Oral/written report on the topic of doctoral thesis at a local congress, conference	5
Abstract at an international congress, conference	5
Abstract at a local congress, conference	2

International patent	30
Latvian patent	10
Scientific monograph (sole author)	40
Section in a scientific monograph (for a section)	10
Research work in foreign countries (for each month)	4
International doctoral seminar, summer school	2-4
Preparation and discussion of the doctoral thesis at the department or within the Doctoral Council	30

The aim of the compulsory part of education is to extend knowledge of doctoral students, improve skills of scientific research work, prepare the candidate for a doctoral degree for doctoral examinations. This part includes compulsory study subjects, doctoral seminars, doctoral examinations and dissemination of knowledge (pedagogical work). Teaching of compulsory study courses in the first year allows the doctoral student to use the newly obtained knowledge when planning foundations of the independent research paper.

The study course "Scientific Methodology" develops research planning, structuring and management skills, as well as skills to critically analyse, summarise and interpret empirical data. This course is read by prof. Kristīne Mārtinsons, which is the editor of books "Research: Theory and Practice" (RaKa, 2016) and "Scientific Writing and Dissemination of Research Results" (RSU, 2018).

The study course "Research Ethics" fosters professional responsibility of students towards research subjects, teams and society. The aims of the study course "Pedagogy of Higher Education Institution" is to develop skills to doctoral students to prepare and teach academic and practical study courses to students of higher education institutions, as well as communication professionals at courses and seminars. Students learn qualitative and quantitative research methods in two study courses, which cover sociological surveys and interviews, as well as methods of analysis of the content of media texts. The compulsory study course "Communication and Cultural Theories" provides knowledge about multimedia and communication culture research paradigms. At the second year of studies, the study course "Writing of Scientific Papers / Scientific Language" develops academic writing skills, helps to shape the structure of the text of the doctoral thesis.

Doctoral seminars are organised from time to time. Students familiarise with their plan of preparation of the doctoral thesis and the work that has been performed, discuss what their colleagues have done, as well as discuss previously selected topics of communication science, which are valuable for the performance of research work.

Dissemination of knowledge fosters skills of students to share their knowledge with others – students of Bachelor and Master study programmes, scientists, communication practitioners and interested non-specialist audiences. The doctoral student may do pedagogical work in his or her workplace or at the RSU department, in which his or her supervisor of the doctoral thesis is working. An entry about doing pedagogical work is made in the doctoral student's book and based on it the commission of the Department of Doctoral Studies awards credit points every year. Doctoral students plan their work themselves in such a way that the total amount in this part of studies in

three years would reach 8 CP.

The Department of Doctoral Studies offer courses of the elective part taking into account the specialisation of the study programme and the possibilities of attracting specialists working outside RSU to read short courses. Doctoral students select one study course in accordance with the topic of their doctoral thesis, for which they obtain 2 CP. The courses corresponding to the field of the doctoral thesis may be selected also in other doctoral programmes of RSU.

2.2. Assessment of the interrelation between the information included in the study courses/ modules, the intended learning outcomes, the set aims and other indicators, the relation between the aims of the study course/ module and the aims and intended outcomes of the study programme. In case of a doctoral study programme, provide a description of the main research roadmaps and the impact of the study programme on research and other education levels.

The mapping of the outcomes of the study programme and study courses allows to state that the study programme and study courses correspond to the relevant EQF/LQF level and the requirements set in regulatory enactments, ensures student-centred approach. The outcomes of study courses and the study programme are harmonised and logically interrelated; they correspond to the outcomes of the study programme. The study courses being implemented ensure comprehensive implementation of the study programme.

RSU focuses on excellence in research and conducts high-quality research in strategic (Latvian and RSU) research directions and uses the obtained knowledge for the benefit of society, influences the development of global (including by participating in the world congress of Latvian lawyers) legal thought. Active involvement in research is the main institutional value and the basis on which RSU development is based.

In research, RSU acts in accordance with approved strategies; the current strategy was developed in 2015: "Development Strategy of RSU Scientific Institution for 2015 – 2020". The strategy is based on all three of the RSU's key directions of action – internationally competitive education, excellent research, and technology transfer to strengthen innovation as the foundation for RSU's sustainable development. As a research institution, RSU aims to train highly qualified research staff, support excellent science and efficient technology transfer to foster innovation and increase RSU's global competitiveness. The medium-term objective is to offer and implement extensive academic and professional university education, as well as research opportunities in the following basic directions – medicine, health and social care, teaching, social sciences and natural sciences (Article 2.2 of the RSU Constitution). In the strategy development process, based on RSU research resources, RSU research was prioritised into three main blocks:

- leading areas of research,
- supporting areas of research,
- new growth areas of research.

The relevant research blocks are based on the availability of resources and the potential for sustainable development, the accumulated experience, the presence of strategic leadership and the importance of the research industry for the overall development of RSU. The priorities have been selected in the medium term. RSU supports research in all directions of social sciences, which have the supportive capacity at RSU, and all such research is a priority to strengthen the role of

social sciences at RSU. The direction has great untapped potential, especially in close collaboration with leading research and development sectors, providing a critical assessment and alternative views, making a significant contribution to addressing societal challenges. Synergy with health sciences is focused on public health promotion. Social innovation is a significant field of synergy, which supports healthy lifestyle, family health, active and healthy ageing.

The doctoral study programme has a direct influence on research, because it focuses not only on new discoveries and creation of knowledge, but also on the use of the obtained knowledge for the benefit of development and education of society, including:

- 1) doctoral students are involved in the development of RSU research directions by preparing relevant doctoral theses and scientific publications; in particular, work is done to increase the number of publications of doctoral students in scientific journals indexed in *SCOPUS* and *Web of Science*. Close synergy between research and studies is an important factor to ensure the increase in quality and quantity of quoted publications, which would allow involving students of the doctoral study programme in research and publishing of scientific articles;
- 2) doctoral students can receive grants for their scientific activity, which foster more active participation in European and global congresses, conferences and other scientific events of importance in law;
- 3) doctoral students can participate in mobility programmes and obtain information for their research paper in this way;
- 4) doctoral students get widely involved in ensuring the study process, reading lectures and classes, supervising and reviewing Master, Bachelor and course papers, etc.

When evaluating the perspective development of the study programme, it should be concluded that it develops in accordance with the tasks of Latvia in the implementation of common strategies of the European Union (common foreign and security policy), because the study programme includes courses that are in line with the key elements of this strategy that make the doctoral programme competitive.

One of challenges of the [Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030](#) are rapid changes in world economy and technologies, as a result of which an effective and flexible higher education system is a decisive factor in the Latvia's competitiveness and human capital value.

The medium and long-term labour market forecasts of the Ministry of Economics (MoE) show that there is a very large number of employees above 50 in the highly qualified professions in health care, education system, science, and manufacturing. This means that these people will soon leave the labour market, so solutions must be looked for to the problems that may arise in the labour market in the future. In addition, the population of Latvia is shrinking and will continue to decline, so economic growth scenarios shall also be seen in the context of demographic forecasts, as the population in Latvia is expected to decline by more than 60,000 by 2022, and the working age population will decline more rapidly than the overall population. Consequently, Latvia cannot promote economic growth by increasing the number of employees. So there is only the second option – labour productivity, which can be achieved in three different ways – by investing in new technologies and equipment, making work processes more efficient, and investing in human capital. Forecasts show that the increase in dynamics of the number of employees will be very moderate in the medium term. Therefore, the decisive factor will be productivity, which will enable each industry to achieve faster growth rates in the future. (see [Labour market requirements should be respected also by the education system; Implementation provisions of specific aid objective 8.5.2 “Ensuring compliance of vocational training with the European Qualifications Framework” of the Operational Programme “Growth and Employment” \(OP 2016/85.1\)](#))

As a variant of the transformation of the current programme, which would make it possible to attract funding for the development of new study programmes, using the European Social Fund co-financing for Activity 8.2.1 “Reduce fragmentation of study programmes and strengthen resource sharing”, is the creation of a joint doctoral study programme in social sciences.

The information included in the study courses, the learning outcomes are interrelated; the aims of the study courses correspond to the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme. The doctoral study programme has a significant impact on research and other levels of education.

2.3. Assessment of the study implementation methods (including the evaluation methods) by providing the analysis of how the study implementation methods (including the evaluation methods) used in the study courses/ modules are selected, what they are, and how they contribute to the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study courses and the aims of the study programme. Provide an explanation of how the student-centred principles are taken into account in the implementation of the study process.

The study process of the doctoral study programme “Communication Sciences” is implemented in the form of lectures, classes and independent work. All the advanced technologies available at RSU are used during lectures and classes.

A lot of attention is paid to independent work, which is aimed at the studying and analysis of scientific literature, acquisition and analysis of empirical research material, preparation of reports and individual projects. The course of the study process is documented in the doctoral student’s book, which is an individual doctoral study record document, in which they specify the tasks to be performed during the doctoral studies, as well as give an overview of the execution of the planned work. At the beginning of each study year, doctoral student’s work plan is drawn up in agreement with the supervisor of the doctoral thesis, and implementation of the plan is assessed at the end of the year. The doctoral student’s book also reflects the completed study courses, pedagogical work, publications, participation in conferences, and other activities.

During their studies at RSU, students have a possibility to ask questions they are interested in, discuss them with the lecturer and fellow students. Problem-centred teaching strategies are used for studies. All additional study materials are freely available to the students in e-studies environment. It also provides references to additional information sources for studying the specific issues, as well as materials for self-guided learning (for example, practical assignments that can be done at home with self-assessment algorithm).

Both formative and summative evaluation is used in studies. The formative evaluation takes place during everyday study process: by asking control questions to the students during the contact lessons, as well as by discussing the independent works of students that are practised during the study process. The summative evaluation takes place at the conclusion of each study course as a test or doctoral examination. Summative evaluation tests are organised in a written form (in paper format or electronically) or as oral discussions.

At the end of each study course, students are asked to complete the evaluation survey in RSU e-environment, wherein they can express their opinion and provide proposals both regarding the content of the study course and the methods of implementation thereof, as well as competences and work style of the lecturers. Therefore, study courses are updated each year in accordance with the evaluation given by the students. Representatives of the students are also involved in faculty

councils ensuring representation of the opinion in decision-making.

RSU practises student-centred education, providing that:

- an independently learning student is at the centre of the study process;
- learning outcomes are clearly formulated and known, and the student studies to achieve them;
- students know and understand the learning outcomes defined for the study programme or course;
- evaluation of the student's achievements is formed in a way that it is possible to ensure whether and at what level the planned learning outcomes have been achieved;
- the task of the teaching staff is to facilitate the studies of the student so that the student would achieve the set learning outcomes;
- it can be observed that the aggregate of outcomes of separate study courses forms the learning outcomes of the study programme.

Learning outcomes of the study programme are formulated in a student-centred way and:

- establish a unified understanding of students and teaching staff regarding of what is expected from the student at the end of the study course or the programme;
- provide the students with the opportunity to study more effectively, i.e., students clearly know what knowledge and skills they will obtain if they successfully complete the respective course. The students can also track what they already have learned and what they still need to learn, and what is their progress towards achieving the outcomes of the programme;
- present a tool for the teaching staff to be able to organise the study process more effectively: lectures, seminars, group work, discussions, etc., by selecting topics and materials, as well as learning strategies in accordance with the learning outcomes specified for the study course or study programme;
- create a mutual understanding between the teaching staff and colleagues for the achievement of which learning outcome the course is studied and the respective learning method is selected;
- identify those areas where certain types of learning outcomes overlap or lack (by comparing courses and compliance thereof with the programme);
- aid the students in their choice of study courses to study in accordance with learning outcomes the student wishes to achieve;
- provide clear information for employers on knowledge and skills the students will have obtained, as well as provide an opportunity to assess this knowledge and skills in accordance with the defined professional qualification.

The study implementation and evaluation methods foster the achievement of the results of study courses and the achievement of the set aim of the study programme.

The [Rules of Doctoral Studies](#) contain types and forms of testing and assessment of knowledge, as well as the system of assessment of knowledge and skills.

2.4. If the study programme entails a traineeship, provide the analysis and assessment of the relation between the tasks of the traineeship included in the study programme and the learning outcomes of the study programme. Specify how the higher education institution/ college supports the students within the study programme regarding the fulfilment of the tasks set for students during the traineeship.

Not applicable.

2.5. Analysis and assessment of the topics of the final theses of the students, their relevance in the respective field, including the labour market, and the evaluations of the final theses.

Doctoral theses to be developed deal with the following aspects of communication: communication culture, multimedia communication, government communication, health communication and communication in the public sphere. The practical significance of the doctoral theses is related to the evaluation of government communication and identification of problems ("Government Communication with the Public in Emergency Situations", "Multimedia Communication in Public Administration", "Factors influencing Health Communication in Decision-Making", "Government Rhetoric related to Welfare in Saeima Debate"); these doctoral theses raise the question related to institutional approach to the analysis of communication practices. Three doctoral theses study the factors affecting communication in the public sphere ("Analysis of Political Reasoning Strategies in Pre-election Discussions in Multimedia and Parliamentary Discourse", "Social Values of Latvian People and their Correlation in the Sphere of Public Communication", "Counterculture Semiosis"). Methodological novelty is related to the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches to discourse analysis of the Latvian language corpus ("Welfare ...", "Political Reasoning ...") and the use of quantitative survey databases in the assessment of communication practices ("Latvian People"). The theoretical significance is related to the socio-cultural interaction and interaction between institutions in decision-making and feedback processes, as well as to the possibility of multimedia communication to influence these processes. Three doctoral theses are expected to be submitted for defence at the end of 2020.

Annex 18.1 contains mapping of the study courses for the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study programme.

Annex 19 contains the curriculum of the study programme.

Annex 20 contains descriptions of the study courses of the study programme.

2.6. Analysis and assessment of the outcomes of the surveys conducted among the students, graduates, and employers, and the use of these outcomes for the improvement of the content and quality of studies by providing the respective examples.

The results of surveys of students, employers and graduates are used for improvement of the quality of studies. After each study course, students fill out an evaluation questionnaire of study courses, while after graduation from the study programme – the survey about the study programme. Lecturers read evaluation questionnaires and provide feedback. Every semester survey results are discussed at the Doctoral Council to decide on improvement measures, for example, the study course "Communication and Cultural Theories" was moved to the first

semester. The content of the study course “Methodology of Quantitative Research” was improved taking into account the knowledge previously obtained by doctoral students and topics of their doctoral theses. Planning of lectures and seminars takes place taking into account the working schedule of working doctoral students. The submitted electronic questionnaires urge to improve the literature included in study courses and its availability. As a result of them the literature available at the library has been evaluated and new books have been purchased.

2.7. Provide the assessment of the options of the incoming and outgoing mobility of the students, the dynamics of the number of the used opportunities, and the recognition of the study courses acquired during the mobility.

Mobility opportunities have been used by one doctoral student who attended the summer school for doctoral students in Milan and the credit points obtained at the school were recognised by RSU. Other students admit that the main reason for not using mobility is regular work and family in Latvia, which does not encourage long-term absence.

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme)

3.1. Assessment of the compliance of the resources and provision (study provision, scientific support (if applicable), informative provision (including libraries), material and technical provision, and financial provision) with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the learning outcomes to be achieved by providing the respective examples. Whilst carrying out the assessment, it is possible to refer to the information provided for in the criteria set forth in Part II, Chapter 3, sub-paragraphs 3.1 to 3.3.

Doctoral students have computer classrooms with quantitative and qualitative data processing programs installed (SPSS, MAXQDA, MonoConc, NVivo) at their disposal. RSU Library provides access, including a remote access, to e-book and e-journal databases (Ebook Central, ScienceDirect, ProQuest, Sage Journals, Wiley Online Library, EBSCOhost, Cambridge University Press). Due to the small number of doctoral students and their narrow specialisation, the teaching staff also provide literature for students from their private libraries. The development and maintenance of the unique empirical data resources (Saeima Corpus, Internet Comment Corpus, Population Survey Data) are provided by the funding of internal grants (2013-2015), the National Research Programme (2015-2021) and other grants (including the US Federal Assistance Award, projects funded by the Ministry of Culture on refugee crisis coverage and media literacy).

See Section II, paragraph 3.2 of the Study Direction description.

3.2. Assessment of the study provision and scientific support, including the resources

provided within the cooperation with other science institutes and institutions of higher education (applicable to the doctoral study programmes).

In cooperation with the Artificial Intelligence Laboratory of the University of Latvia (UL), teaching staff of the RSU Faculty of Communication has created two Latvian language corpuses. Barometrs.korpuss.lv allows analysing the comments of readers of the online news portals. Doctoral students participated in the development of the Saeima corpus and quantitative (nosketch.korpuss.lv/) and qualitative (saeima.korpuss.lv/) discourse analysis of stenographs of the 5th-12th Saeima is currently enabled online. Within the scope of the INTERFRAME-LV subproject implemented by RSU teaching staff, work on the creation of the corpus of the 1st-4th Saeima will continue.

When implementing scientific projects, RSU has accumulated a data array of sociological research (incl. on communication and media use habits), which can be used by doctoral students. The Statistical Laboratory provides consultations and helps students to process data. A universal media quantitative analysis methodology has been developed together with a doctoral student and a member of teaching staff of the Statistical Laboratory Diāna Kalniņa. Being adaptable to the needs of different applied research, it will allow to accumulate an empirical database and facilitate the processing of data for students of all levels.

Presently, doctoral students invest their own resources (tuition fee) in the study process, however, from 2019, the RSU Department of Doctoral Studies provides research grants also to those doctoral students, who study for their own funds. Grants are granted for conducting empirical research, translation and editing of scientific publications, as well as to pay for participation in conferences. Since 2016, the RSU Faculty of Communication is involved in NRP and international research programmes. The doctoral students involved in the implementation of these programmes, use these financial resources for research (surveys, interviews) and to pay for the attendance of conferences (Baikovska, Kačāne, Kalniņa, Kažoka, Kozlovs, Mirošņika). At present, these resources are guaranteed until 2022.

Since 2014, Ilva Skulte has been organising a summer school “Cultural Journalism” for master students. Therefore, lecturers of the summer school are also students of the doctoral study programme Kalniņa, Kažoka and Kozlovs.

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (4. Teaching Staff)

4.1. Analysis and assessment of the changes to the composition of the teaching staff over the reporting period and their impact on the study quality.

17 lecturers with a doctoral degree participate in the implementation of the academic doctoral study programme, five of which are experts approved by the Latvian Council of Science in the field of mass media and communication. The requirement of Section 55 of the Law on the Institutions of Higher Education – five and three lecturers, respectively. The programme is implemented by eight professors, five associate professors and four assistant professors, 13 of which have been elected

at the Rīga Stradiņš University. Lecturers, whose qualification and abilities are on a high level and have been evaluated during a long cooperation period, are involved in the implementation of the study direction and programmes; therefore, changes in the teaching staff are insignificant.

For the composition of academic staff see Annexes 24.6 and 24.7.

4.2. Assessment of the compliance of the qualification of the teaching staff members (academic staff members, visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers, and visiting assistants) involved in the implementation of the study programme with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the provisions set out in the respective regulatory enactments. Provide information on how the qualification of the teaching staff members contributes to the achievement of the learning outcomes.

Five members of teaching staff involved in the implementation of the programme are LSP experts in fields of mass media and communication sciences (Hanovs, Kruks, Rožuklane, Dimants, Meckl). In accordance with the Law on Scientific Activity, the right to award doctoral degrees may be provided to a higher education institution, if it implements a relevant accredited doctoral study programme and at least three experts approved by LSP are involved in the implementation of this programme. Out of all the lecturers involved in the programme two have a doctoral degree in information and communication science, two – in psychology, two – in pedagogy, one – in philology, one – in law, one – in humanities, one – in history, one – in philosophy, one – in economics, five – in sociology. The involvement of several lecturers in the implementation of study courses promotes the multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approach to research, which is particularly necessary, when evaluating the multi-faceted influence of media on daily life. Representatives of different fields of science have already cooperated and continue to cooperate in the implementation of three scientific research projects. Academic staff has experience in work in the implementation of doctoral study programmes. Two doctoral theses on communication and new media have been defended in the study programme “Sociology” of the RSU Department of Doctoral Studies even before this doctoral study programme was opened. One supervised by Sergejs Kruks – on audiences of Latvian niche magazines, the other supervised by Ilva Skulte – on Latvian network communities. Presently, the preparation of doctoral theses in communication sciences is supervised by professors Deniss Hanovs, Sergejs Kruks, Anda Rožukalne and assistant professor Agita Lūse. Scientific and research interests of the lecturers are related to the problems characteristic to the doctoral studies. A. Rožukalne studies media organisation and audiences. Research interests of I. Skulte include communication language and the use of new media among children. D. Hanovs studies culture, globalisation and political communication. S. Kruks is interested in the use of different information carriers in communication, political and applied communication, as well as discourse analysis and semiotics methods in studying the message content. By developing the school of semiotics in Latvia, S. Kruks has achieved that Latvia was accepted in the Nordic Association for Semiotics in 2019, and he now represents the country in this organisation. A. Stakle is an art photographer and a researcher of photography. Xavier Landes studies populist communication relating to the decline of a welfare country. The scope of interests of A. Lūse includes health communication. M. Mekls studies communication culture and social media. A. Dimants analyses media organisations and systems, as well as journalism cultures.

The qualifications of academic staff and visiting professors correspond to the conditions of implementation of the study programme and the requirements of regulatory enactments.

4.3. Information on the number of the scientific publications of the academic staff members, involved in the implementation of the doctoral study programme, as published during the reporting period by listing the most significant publications published in Scopus or WoS CC indexed journals. As for the social sciences, humanitarian sciences, and the science of art, the scientific publications published in ERIH+ indexed journals may be additionally specified (if applicable).

The teaching staff of the RSU Faculty of Communication has implemented and continues to implement several research projects. In 2013-2015, an internal grant of RSU allowed identifying changes in communication under the influence of the economic crisis and recession. The research results had been summarised in a collective monograph "Economic Crisis in Latvia: Aftertaste of the "Success Story", which was published by the Rīga Stradiņš University in 2016. The obtained insights helped to formulate issues for the next research project. In 2014-2018, the project "Reflection regarding values and action models during social and economical changes" was financed by the National Research Programme. The results have been summarised in the collective monograph "Pluralism anxiety: Latvians acting socially". Interdisciplinary cooperation has been practically reassured in the implementation of these projects: scientists in the field of communication, economics, social anthropology and psychology have come to joint conclusions, which have been fully integrated when implementing another NRP research project, INTERFRAME-LV, in 2019. D. Kalniņa plays a very important role in this project, because she is developing a methodology for determining the social activity of citizens.

Since 2010, lecturers of the Department for Communication Studies in cooperation with the LU Artificial Intelligence laboratory have developed and continue to improve the methodology of computerised processing of digital communication texts. Resources *barometrs.korpuss.lv/* and *saeima.korpuss.lv/* are available online. Funding for these projects was provided by RSU, NRP, the Ministry of Culture, the US Embassy in Riga and *Clusterpoint*. The study course "Corpus Analysis" has been developed as a result of implementation of these projects. Methodological articles have been published:

- Kruks, S., I.Skulte (2016) "Disappearance of Politics in the Latvian Parliamentary Discourse", *Latvijas Zinātņu Akadēmijas Vēstis* 70 (3):51-58.
- Dargis, G. Rabante-Busa, I. Auzina, S. Kruks (2016) "ParliSearch – a system for large text corpus discourse analysis". P.115-121 in I. Skadiņa, R. Rozis (eds) *Human language technologies – the Baltic perspective : Proceedings of the 7th International Conference Baltic HLT 2016*. - Amsterdam : IOS Press.
- Rožukalne, A., K.Sedlenieks (2017) "The elusive cyber beasts : how to identify the communication of pro-Russian hybrid trolls in Latvia's internet news sites?", *Central European Journal of Communication* 10(1): 79-97.

In 2017-2018, researchers of the Faculty of Communication in cooperation with the RSU Statistical Laboratory conducted the quantitative and qualitative analysis of media content on the representation of refugees. This research has laid the foundations for the creation of a universal digital platform for quantitative analysis of media content. The platform is approbated in the Bachelor's study course "Media Criticism and Analysis", where students analyse media in Latvian, Russian and Erasmus students also in other languages.

The lecturers involved in the implementation of the doctoral study programme publish academic articles in Latvian and English in peer-reviewed scientific journals in Latvia and abroad. Lecturers

cooperate with media and communication professionals, speak in mass media and organise practical classes for professionals, this raising the prestige of academic education.

The study programme for acquisition of a doctoral degree is based in achievements and insights of mass media and the field of communication sciences, which is certified by the nomenclature of offered courses, topics of lectures and classes and the scientific literature recommended for study courses. Academic activities of doctoral students at national and international level certify compliance of obtained knowledge, skills and competences with the requirements set for doctoral studies.

In 2016, doctoral students Kozlovs and Kalniņa participated as researchers in the research project funded by RSU "Overcoming Crisis in Latvia". The following publications were prepared as a result of the research:

- Kalniņa, D. (2016) "Latvijas lietišķā kultūra. Hofstede's kultūras dimensiju indeksu mērījums nacionāli reprezentatīvajā aptaujā". Pp. 201-224 in S. Kruks (ed.) *Ekonomiskā krīze Latvijā: "Veiksmes stāsta" pēcgārša*. Rīga: Rīgas Stradiņa Universitāte.
- Kozlovs, N. (2016) *Ālternatīvo mediju ideoloģiskie vēstījumi kā demokratizācijas instrumenti*". Pp. 193-200 in S. Kruks (ed.) *Ekonomiskā krīze Latvijā: "Veiksmes stāsta" pēcgārša*. Rīga: Rīgas Stradiņa Universitāte.

In 2016-2017, Kačāne, Mirošņika, Kozlovs, Kalniņa, Kažoka and Baikovska worked on the implementation of NRP EKOSOC-LV as researchers. The research results were presented at the NRP EKOSOC-LV conference (LU and RSU, 3.-4.11.2016), at the RSU Scientific Conference (6-7.04.2017) and at the 12th Conference on Baltic Studies in Europe (LU, 19-21.06. 2017), Riga Readings in Social Sciences 2017 (LU, 23.11.2017). The doctoral students have published the following articles:

- Kačāne, V. (2017) "After the 'Oligarchs': Argumentation strategies in the parliamentary elections campaigns, *Cultural and Religious Studies* 5(8): 481-487.
- Kažoka, A. (2018) "Civil Society in Action: The Professional Organizations of Medical Doctors". Pp. 125-140 in Kruk, S. (ed.) *Pluralism Anxiety. Acting Socially in Latvia*. Rīga: Rīga Stradiņš University.
- Mirošņika, K. (2017) "Valsts pārvaldes komunikācijas internetā", *Akadēmiskā Dzīve*, 52: 99-109.
- Kalniņa, D. (2018) *Attitudes to Social Action Across Socio-Demographic Groups*". Pp. 105-124 in Kruk, S. (ed.) *Pluralism Anxiety. Acting Socially in Latvia*. Rīga: Rīga Stradiņš University.
- Skulte, I. un N. Kozlovs (2018) "Depoliticization of the Saeima Debates: Loosing the Gist of 'Welfare'". Pp. 171-186 in Kruk, S. (ed.) *Pluralism Anxiety. Acting Socially in Latvia*. Rīga: Rīga Stradiņš University.

The doctoral students presented the research results of their doctoral thesis at conferences:

- RSU Scientific Conference, 22-23.03.2018 (Kažoka, Siliņa, Baikovska, Kalniņa, Kozlovs).
- RSU international interdisciplinary conference on social sciences PLACES, 1-5.04.2019 (Kažoka, Baikovska, Kalniņa, Kozlovs)
- XIX Conference "Latvia 100: Expectations, Achievements and Challenges", BAT, 19.04.2018 (Kažoka, Kalniņa)
- 28th Scientific Readings, Daugavpils University, 25-26.01.2018 (Kalniņa, Kažoka)
- AABS Conference, Stanford University, 1-3.06.2018 (Kalniņa)
- Communication in the Global Village: Interests and Influences, BAT, 18.05.2017 (Kalniņa)
- 60th International Scientific Conference of Daugavpils University, 26-27.04.2018 (Kozlovs)
- 13th Conference on Baltic Studies in Europe, Gdansk University, 21-23.06.2019, (Kalniņa).
- 2nd Riga Readings in Social Sciences (RRSS) "Baltic Sea Region: One Hundred Years On",

22-23.2018 (Savicka, Kalniņa)

- 12th Annual Scientific Baltic Business Management Conference ASBBMC 2019 “Foreseeing Challenges and Opportunities for Organizations at the Macro and Micro Level”, RISEBA, 21-23.02.2019 (Kalniņa)
- International Scientific Practical Conference HEALTH AND PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT: INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH, RSU, 25-27.04.2019 (Kalniņa)
- LU Conference "New Challenges of Economic and Business Development 2019", LU, 16.05.2019 (Kalniņa).
- Impact of public opinion on judges and judicial system, Riga, 26.01.2018 (Savicka)
- International Scientific Conference Society. Health. Welfare, RSU, 23-25.11.2016 (Savicka)
- European Congress of Qualitative Inquiry, KU Leuven, Belgium, 6-9.02.2018 (Baikovska)
- Emerging Disability Issues, Malta, 2-4.05.2018 (Baikovska)
- Societal Security in the Baltic Sea region, 27.11.2018 (Siliņa)

Articles have been published:

- Kozlovs, N. un I. Skulte (2019) “Hauntological aspects of steampunk philosophy”. Pp. 259-269 in R.Šmite, R.Šmits (eds) Virtualities and Realities Rīga: RIXC.
- Kažoka, A., D.Kalniņa (2019) “Maskulīnās varas valodas pazīmes Latvijas sievišķīgo vērtību sabiedrībā”. Pp. 101-111 in Kultūras studijas. Daugavpils: Daugavpils Universitāte.

In 2019-2020, doctoral student Kalniņa has been a researcher in NRP INTERFRAME-LV. Doctoral student Baikovska has received a grant from the US Embassy for the research “Raising disability awareness in Latvia”.

Doctoral students Kalniņa and Kažoka read lectures and seminars in the Summer School of Cultural Journalism in Riga (9–12.08.2017) and Kraslava (16–19.08.2018.). Kalniņa has prepared new courses for students of RSU Bachelor and Master study programmes: “Basics of SPSS, Statistical Data Processing Programme. Complicated Explained Simply”, “Use of Publicly Available Research Databases for Independent Scientific Work” and “Statistics”. The topic of the doctoral thesis of Savicka is about health communication problems. During her studies, the doctoral student has developed and licenced the Master’s study programme “Health Communication”. Doctoral students Baikovska and Proskurova attended doctoral Summer Schools:

- European Media and Communication Doctoral Summer School, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milano, 24.07-4.08.2017 (Baikovska),
- Baltic Summer School for Digital Humanities, Riga, 17.-20.07.2018 (Proskurova).

Doctoral student do pedagogical work. Siliņa, Kozlovs, Savicka are teaching staff of the Faculty of Communication, Kalniņa has been working at the RSU Statistics Laboratory since 2018 and teaches a course on quantitative methods to students of the academic programme “Psychology”.

Baikovska, Mirošņika, Kažoka and Kačāne read lectures, lead seminars, supervise course and Bachelor papers for students of the Faculty of Communication. Proskurova has experience of teaching study courses at the Tallinn University (*Critical analysis of media texts, Media and culture*).

Doctoral students successfully increase scientific capacity of Latvia. Kalniņa is adopting Geert Hofstede’s measurements of applied culture dimensions in Latvia. The doctoral students performed two representative web-surveys and popularised their results at scientific conferences, in articles and lectures, as well as popular science publications and at applied conferences. Kažoka participated in the creation of the Saeima corpus, she disseminates the approbated quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis of corpus discourse and the methodological algorithms obtained in practice in lectures and practical classes in Master’s study programmes. Baikovska got

involved in the research of discourse on disability by identifying cognitive models on disability in media, NGO and professional discourse and manifestations of these models in regulatory enactments, The doctoral student familiarises with the results of her research NGO activists, students of the Faculty of Communication and the Faculty of Rehabilitation, incl. by supervising course and Bachelor's theses on this topic.

When implementing the study programme, close cooperation has established among doctoral students uniting their individual competences into quantitative and qualitative research methods. Thus, Kalniņa and Baikovska work together studying public communication of NGOs, Kažoka and Kalniņa – dimensions of applied cultures and their manifestations in public discourse. Baikovska has familiarised colleagues with the knowledge obtained in the Milan Summer School on latest discourse analysis methodology trends. Kalniņa, who has education of a mathematician and the experience of statistical analysis from work with SKDS, provides consultations to Kažoka on possibilities of statistical analysis of the Saeima corpus.

See Annex 6.4 "List of publications of teaching staff in the reporting period".

4.4. Information on the participation of the academic staff, involved in the implementation of the doctoral study programme, in scientific projects as project managers or prime contractors/ subproject managers/ leading researchers by specifying the name of the relevant project, as well as the source and the amount of the funding. Provide information on the reporting period (if applicable).

The research implemented by RSU's academic staff in the last six years has allowed gaining practical experience in writing, planning, structuring, data collection and processing for research projects, as well as the experience of dissemination of obtained knowledge, which lecturers share with students. The databases of Omnibus surveys, semi-structured interview and field work, as well as two collective monographs and scientific articles created during research are used in the study process. Empirical research helped to find correlations of communication practices with social and demographic indicators of respondents, as well as the Hefstede applied cultural dimensions indexes identified in representative surveys allow to judge in a justified way on some peculiarities of communication culture, which is the aim included in the name of the doctoral study programme, and about the influence of procedures not related to culture on communicative action of individuals.

The teaching staff involved in the programme conduct high quality individual research activities. The academic staff regularly upgrade their qualification by participating in various conferences in Latvia and abroad. In recent years, the teaching staff have participated in international conferences and published scientific articles in various scientific editions. Publications of academic staff are listed in Annex 6.4. The attendance at conferences is given in Annex 6.2, summarised in Annex 6.5. The lecturers are involved in the organisation of conferences and other events aimed at popularizing the results of the research work and discussing current issues. The lecturers involved in the programme are active in professional societies and associations. The teaching staff organise conferences in cooperation with other institutions.

Professor S.Kruks has managed the project "Economic, Social and Communication Aspects of Crisis" funded by RSU internal grant (2013-2015, budget of 45 thousand LVL), the sub-project of the National Research Programme (NRP) "Transformation of national economy, smart growth, management and legal framework for sustainable development of the state and the society - new approaches for creating sustainable knowledge society", EKOSOC-LV (2014-2018, budget of 90

thousand EUR), EUR), and is currently managing the NRP sub-project Challenges and Solutions Latvian State and Society in the international context, INTERFRAME-LV (2019-2021, 120 thousand EUR).

4.5. Provide examples of the involvement of the academic staff in the scientific research and/or artistic creation activities both at national and at international level (in the fields related to the content of the study programme), as well as the use of the obtained information in the study process.

Research work of the academic staff is mostly related to the lecturers' specialization within the framework of the programme and their study courses. Studies conducted by the academic staff are an important contribution to both the development of the represented field and the development of the study programme, as well as the improvement of the study content. Through research, the lecturers bring the most topical industry novelties to the study courses. Teaching staff prepares scientific papers, participates in conferences and practical seminars, develops textbooks and methodological materials.

Doctoral theses at RSU are supervised only by scientists with the rights of the expert of the Latvian Council of Science, which confirms that scientists are constantly doing research and publishing research results at international level.

Professor A.Rožukalne, Associate Professor I. Skulte participated as researchers in RSU Internal Grant and NRP projects mentioned in the Annex 4.4. A. Rožukalne, I.Skulte, S.Kruks and A.Stakle carried out the research commissioned by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia on the media coverage of the refugee crisis (2017-2018) and are currently working in the project dedicated to media literacy.

The results of RSU Grant and NRP research projects (including articles by doctoral students Kalniņa, Kažoka and Kozlovs) were published in two books, which are currently being used in the Master's and doctoral studies. Empirical databases obtained through these and other projects have been used in the study programmes at all levels.

4.6. Assessment of the cooperation between the teaching staff members by specifying the mechanisms used to promote the cooperation and ensure the interrelation between the study courses/ modules. Specify also the proportion of the number of the students and the teaching staff within the study programme (at the moment of the submission of the Self-Assessment Report).

The study process is clearly, understandably and logically structured. An established and successfully functioning quality management system ensures continuous transparency of the study process and allows to stably advance towards the goal and reach it successfully.

The doctoral study programme has a mechanism for mutual cooperation between teaching staff. It promotes the improvement and interlinking of study courses. When implementing interdisciplinary projects, lecturers of the Faculty of Communication cooperated with researchers in the field of sociology, social anthropology, psychology, economics and statistical data analysis. This resulted in

the improvement of the course Qualitative Research Methods by extending the knowledge base on formulation of interviews and questionnaires; the course “Communication and Cultural Theories” has been developed using the ideas provided by psychologists on social representations, attitudes, values and anonymity. During seminars, all doctoral students, regardless of the field of their doctoral thesis, discuss the matters of collecting quantitative empirical data and use and statistical processing of secondary data.

When calculating the total number of lecturers, as indicated in the accreditation documents of the Doctoral study programme “Communication Culture and Multimedia”, the total number of lecturers involved in the implementation of the programme is 20, while the total number of students was 8 on 3 October 2019, so the ratio of students and lecturers is 0.4. Although the number of students is relatively small and this may raise questions about the financial cost-effectiveness of the study programme, it should be noted that part of the study courses is implemented jointly for all or several RSU doctoral programme students, thereby sharing resources. The joint implementation of study courses strengthens the financial cost-effectiveness of study programmes and supports interdisciplinary cooperation between students.

See Section II, paragraph 3.4., 3.5. un 3.6. of the Study Direction description.

Annexes

III. Description of the Study Programme - 1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme		
Compliance of the joint study programme with the provisions of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (table)		
Statistics on the students over the reporting period	16_pielik_Dkm_Statistika_eng.pdf	16_pielik_Dkm_Statistika_lv.pdf
III. Description of the Study Programme - 2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof		
Compliance of the study programme with the State Education Standard		
Compliance of the qualification to be acquired upon completion of the study programme with the professional standard (if applicable)		
Compliance of the study programme with the specific regulatory framework applicable to the relevant field (if applicable)		
Mapping of the study courses/ modules for the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study programme	18.1_pielik_StK_St-rezult_kartejums_Dkm_eng.pdf	18.1_pielik_StK_StR_kartejums_Dkm_lv.pdf
Curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme)	19_pielik_DSP_planojums_ENG.pdf	19_pielik_DSP_planojums_LV.pdf
Descriptions of the study courses/ modules	20_pielik_Dkm_StK_ENG.pdf	20_pielik_Dkm_StK_LV.pdf
Description of the Study Direction - Other mandatory attachments		
Sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme.	24-1_DSP_KM_diploms_ENG.pdf	24-1_DSP_KM_diploms_LV.pdf
Description of the Study Programme - Other mandatory attachments		
Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college will provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme or at another higher education institution/ college (a contract with another accredited higher education institution/ college), in case the implementation of the study programme is discontinued	24.2_pielikums_Apliecinajums_par_citu_StP_IKZ_parakstits_tulk.pdf	24.2_pielikums_Apliecinajums_par_citu_StP_IKZ_parakstits.pdf
Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college guarantees to the students a compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the higher education institution/ college (actions or failure to act) and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme	24.3_pielikums_Apliecinajums_par_zaudejumiem_IKZ_parakstits_eng.pdf	24.3_pielikums_Apliecinajums_par_zaudejumiem_IKZ_parakstits.pdf
Confirmation of the higher education institution/ college that the teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language according to European language levels (see the levels under www.europass.lv), if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language.	24.5_pielik_Apliecin_anglu_val_StV_IKZ_parakstits_eng.pdf	24.5_pielik_Apliecin_anglu_val_StV_IKZ_parakstits.pdf
If the study programmes in the study direction subject to the assessment are doctoral study programmes, a confirmation that at least five teaching staff members with doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field or sub-field of science, in which the study programme has intended to award a scientific degree.	24-6-7_pielik_apliecinajums_DSP_KKM_eng.pdf	24-6-7_pielik_apliecinajums_DSP_KKM_lv.pdf
If academic study programmes are implemented within the study direction, a document confirming that the academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the provisions set out in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause three of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education	24-6-7_pielik_apliecinajums_DSP_KKM_eng.pdf	24-6-7_pielik_apliecinajums_DSP_KKM_lv.pdf
Sample (or samples) of the study agreement	24.8_pielik_Studiju_lig_eng.pdf	24.8_pielik_Studiju_lig_lv.pdf
If academic study programmes for less than 250 full-time students are implemented within the study direction, the opinion of the Council for Higher Education shall be attached in compliance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.	24.9_AIP_atzinums_lv.pdf	24.9_AIP_atzinums_lv.pdf

Strategic Management and Public Relations

Title of the higher education institution	<i>Information and Communication Sciences</i>
ProcedureStudyProgram.Name	<i>Strategic Management and Public Relations</i>
Education classification code	<i>45321</i>
Type of the study programme	<i>Academic master study programme</i>
Name of the study programme director	<i>Ivans Jānis</i>
Surname of the study programme director	<i>Mihailovs</i>
E-mail of the study programme director	<i>ivans.mihailovs@rsu.lv</i>
Title of the study programme director	<i>Dr. iur.</i>
Phone of the study programme director	
Goal of the study programme	<i>The aim of PRSM is to maintain the opportunity for constant improvement of professional and academic knowledge, analytical skills of students, current and future management and public relations specialists necessary for sustainable development of industries at the same time ensuring also the development of industry research and academic studies.</i>
Tasks of the study programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• To train academically educated social science specialists who are able to independently use the acquired theoretical knowledge and research methods in solving specific problems in public relations and strategic management.</i> <i>• To foster the competitiveness of public relations and management specialists on the Latvian and European Union labour market and to achieve that this competitiveness is based on current theoretical insights, high level of skills in public relations and strategic management.</i> <i>• To implement mastering of knowledge in theories of communication, management and public relations and social research methods, paying attention to the latest theoretical approaches, as well as in practice/professional activity.</i> <i>• To develop creative and critical thinking in public relations and strategic management studies.</i> <i>• To promote the development of scientific and academic traditions of public relations and strategic management in Latvia.</i>

Results of the study programme	<p><i>bility to critically analyse and explain current trends and regularities in the development of public relations and management.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• Ability to use theory and problem solution skills to independently act in the field of strategic management and public relations based on mastered knowledge and research work methods.</i> <i>• Ability to forecast changes in the situation in the field of strategic management and public relations, to evaluate the progress of public relations campaigns, to offer optimum solutions.</i> <i>• Ability to perform functions of a public relations manager and participate in organisational management work.</i> <i>• Ability to conduct research in public relations and management by integrating insights from the latest knowledge and practice.</i> <i>• Ability to show profound knowledge and understanding of the latest achievement of the communication science confirming creative thinking and research ability, including when working in-between different fields and sectors.</i>
Final examination upon the completion of the study programme	<i>Master's thesis</i>

Study programme forms

Full time studies - 2 years - latvian

Study type and form	<i>Full time studies</i>
Duration in full years	<i>2</i>
Duration in month	<i>0</i>
Language	<i>latvian</i>
Amount (CP)	<i>80</i>
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Higher education – a Bachelor's degree or fifth level professional qualification in a state-accredited study programme in social sciences or humanities</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Master of Social Sciences in Information and Communication Science</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Rīga Stradiņš University	RĪGA	DZIRCIEMA IELA 16, KURZEMES RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1007
Liepāja branch of Rīga Stradiņš University	LIEPĀJA	RIŅĶU IELA 24/26, LIEPĀJA, LV-3405

Part time studies - 2 years, 6 months - latvian

Study type and form	<i>Part time studies</i>
Duration in full years	<i>2</i>
Duration in month	<i>6</i>
Language	<i>latvian</i>

Amount (CP)	80
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Higher education – a Bachelor's degree or fifth level professional qualification in a state-accredited study programme in social sciences or humanities</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Master of Social Sciences in Information and Communication Science</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Rīga Stradiņš University	RĪGA	DZIRCIEMA IELA 16, KURZEMES RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1007
Liepāja branch of Rīga Stradiņš University	LIEPĀJA	RIŅĶU IELA 24/26, LIEPĀJA, LV-3405

Part time studies - 2 years, 6 months - english

Study type and form	<i>Part time studies</i>
Duration in full years	2
Duration in month	6
Language	<i>english</i>
Amount (CP)	80
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Higher education – a Bachelor's degree or fifth level professional qualification in a state-accredited study programme in social sciences or humanities</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Master of Social Sciences in Information and Communication Science</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Rīga Stradiņš University	RĪGA	DZIRCIEMA IELA 16, KURZEMES RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1007
Liepāja branch of Rīga Stradiņš University	LIEPĀJA	RIŅĶU IELA 24/26, LIEPĀJA, LV-3405

Full time studies - 2 years - english

Study type and form	<i>Full time studies</i>
Duration in full years	2
Duration in month	0
Language	<i>english</i>
Amount (CP)	80
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Higher education – a Bachelor's degree or fifth level professional qualification in a state-accredited study programme in social sciences or humanities</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Master of Social Sciences in Information and Communication Science</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Rīga Stradiņš University	RĪGA	DZIRCIEMA IELA 16, KURZEMES RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1007
Liepāja branch of Rīga Stradiņš University	LIEPĀJA	RIŅĶU IELA 24/26, LIEPĀJA, LV-3405

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme)

1.1. Description and analysis of changes in study programme parameters that have taken place since the issue of the previous accreditation certificate of study direction or the license of study programme if study programme is not included in the accreditation page of the study direction

Nr.	Parameter	Analysis of changes
1.	Study direction	—
2.	Name of the study programme	—
3.	Code of the study programme in accordance with the Latvian Education Classification	—
4.	Director of the study programme	—
5.	Scientific degree of the head of the study programme	The Head of the Study Programme has had a doctoral degree since 2012 (Dr.iur.).
6.	Aim of the study programme	
7.	Objectives of the study programme	The tasks of the study programme were specified considering the development of the study programme, the mapping process and the current trends in education management.
8.	Learning outcomes to be achieved	The intended learning outcomes were specified / supplemented / redefined considering the development of the study programme, the mapping process and the current trends in education management (EQF / NQF).
9.	Final examination upon the completion of the study programme	—
10.	Form and type of the study programme	—

Nr.	Parameter	Analysis of changes
11.	Duration of the study programme	—
12.	Language in which the study programme is implemented	During the course of the accreditation, it is intended to include English as the language for the implementation of <u>the study programme</u> , although there are currently no specific plans to start offering studies in English. According to the plan for the development of the study direction (see Annex 4.1) it is planned to set up a working group to evaluate the extension of the possibilities for the implementation of study programmes.
13.	Amount of the study programme (CP, preferably also ECTS)	—
14.	Admission requirements	—
15.	The degree, to be awarded	—
16.	The professional qualification to be awarded	—
17.	Place of implementation	So far, the study programme has only been implemented in Riga, but in accordance with the plan for the development of the study direction (see page Annex 4.1) it is planned to establish a working group to evaluate the possibilities for implementation of study programmes and to model their implementation plan at RSU Liepaja branch. The material and technical facilities of the branch and RSU as a whole are adequate for its implementation.

1.2. Analysis and assessment of the statistical data on the students of the respective study programme, the dynamics of the number of the students, and the factors affecting the changes to the number of the students. The analysis shall be broken down in the

different study forms, types, and languages.

The number of students in the study programme is stable – 12-14 students on average start studies every year.

Along with RSU advertising materials and activities, as well as information on the RSU website, heads of the study programme get involved in the recruitment of students, including by providing interviews and making publications about study programmes (for example, [Tvnet](#)).

Every year one to two students get enrolled based on recommendations of existing students of the study programme, as well as in 10 years four RSU employees graduated from the study programme, which evidences of trust to the study programme and its appreciation.

Annex 16 provides statistical data on students in the reporting period.

The study programme is accredited for full-time and part-time studies, but only full-time studies are currently being implemented (see Annex 16 Student Statistics within the Reporting Period). According to the Study Direction development plan until 2023, considering the dynamics of the number of students and the results of market research, the availability of resources, workload of lecturers, profitability, etc., the Faculty of Communication will consider the possibility to start also part-time implementation of the study programme. At the time of accreditation, the study programme is also submitted for implementation in English, however, the management of the study programme does not have any specific plans for the next two years.

1.3. Analysis and assessment of the interrelation between the name of the study programme, the degree or professional qualification to be acquired or the degree and professional qualification to be acquired, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and the admission requirements.

The academic Master's study programme "Public Relations and Strategic Management" has been developed in accordance with provisions of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education, including the requirements of Section 55 "Study Programmes".

The study programme offers the possibility to obtain a Master's degree of Social Sciences in communication science. Its amount is 80 CP, and it is intended for two years of full-time studies. The study programme corresponds to the national standard on academic education – Cabinet Regulations No. 240 "Regulations on the National Standard of Academic Education" of 13 May 2014.

The aim, objectives, of the Master's study programme have been derived and learning outcomes have been defined taking into account provisions of regulatory enactments, including the standard on academic education, trends in the higher education space. They are closely interlinked.

The study programme consistently ensures the achievement of study outcomes that include the acquisition of advanced theoretical knowledge and the development of research skills and abilities in public relations and strategic management.

Admission requirements – the intention to enrol persons with prior higher education in humanities or social sciences is the basis to ensure preparation of qualified specialists in two years of studies.

Taking into consideration that studies can be started by people with considerable variety of education, the study programme is designed as follows: in the first semester, to balance the prior knowledge of students, the study courses in strategic management and a number of important communication issues are learned. The study courses offered in the second and third semester provide an extension of the acquired knowledge. In addition, the study programme is characterised by high requirements for student participation, not only in lectures, but also in seminars and other practical classes, including the need to familiarize /study a huge number of scientific literature (supervised by the lecturer within the study course).

The informal ambitious aim of this study programme is to prepare potential opinion leaders and decision makers in the public and private area. The knowledge obtained during two years of studies will allow participating in management of own company, institution or organisation at a new level solving highly responsible matters, seeing new regularities in current social processes. Knowledge of public relations will be useful for management level representatives, knowledge of strategic management – to public relations specialists. Thus, Master's studies are a logical continuation of the knowledge obtained during studying at a Bachelor's by developing new public relations and strategic management competence. Moreover, such a study programme is the only one in Latvia.

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof)

2.1. Assessment of the relevance of the content of the study course/ module and the compliance with the needs of the relevant industry and labour market and with the trends in science. Provide information on how and whether the content of the study course/ module is updated in line with the development trends of the relevant industry, labour market, and science. In case of master's and doctoral study programmes, specify and provide the justification as to whether the degrees are awarded in view of the developments and findings in the field of science or artistic creation.

The content of the study programme is formed by study courses in theories of information and communication, methodology of social research, management theory, human resources management, as well as individual communication directions and a Master's thesis. The content of studies is complementing, consistent, clearly oriented towards the latest insights in the industry and research, as well as has been formed with the aim to provide students with growth and development opportunities, improving their own academic and professional competence. It corresponds to the aims of the study programme and ensures the achievement of learning outcomes, as well as meets the needs of the industry and trends in science.

The study content is updated on a regular basis taking into account the latest scientific literature, insights from public relations and management practices (updating study course descriptions, modernising the content of the study course).

Lecturers of the study programme are recognised practitioners or researchers in the industry, who follow the latest news in the industry on a daily basis, know the requirements of the labour market and employers, participate in projects and prepare scientific publications (see the list of scientific publications in Annex 6.4). This activity is a precondition for qualitative implementation and

development of content of the study programme.

The updating of the content of studies is facilitated by the fact that both the Head of the study programme and the Head of the Study Direction are recognised experts in their field; they regularly participate in higher education, science and communication working groups (including those of the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Culture, that is responsible for media policy); they take part in seminars, projects and conferences, and are directly involved in drafting legislation and policy planning documents. Lecturers of the study programme are also involved in various working groups, projects and conferences; they regularly conduct research work and publish their findings, and act as practitioners in various positions in public administration and NGOs (see CV). The aforementioned ensures that the lecturers of the study programme actively develop and introduce the policy in the sector, are aware of current events, are opinion leaders who are able to implement the most up-to-date conclusions into the content of study courses. This is also confirmed by student survey results, the content of study courses and handouts and the publications of the lecturers.

There is also exchange of opinions with employers in different formats, including during meetings, visiting lectures.

2.2. Assessment of the interrelation between the information included in the study courses/ modules, the intended learning outcomes, the set aims and other indicators, the relation between the aims of the study course/ module and the aims and intended outcomes of the study programme. In case of a doctoral study programme, provide a description of the main research roadmaps and the impact of the study programme on research and other education levels.

Taking into account the results of mapping of the study programme and the defined learning outcomes, study course descriptions have been updated, meetings have been organised with lecturers of study courses to ensure the understanding of the general aim of study programmes, mutual cooperation among lecturers and compliance of study courses with the outcomes of the study programme. Meetings of lecturers of the study programme take place twice a year on average (before Christmas and in summer, when the study year closes). They discuss matters of development of the study programme, academic performance of students, assessment, preparation of research papers. It is evaluated positively that not only staff lecturers, but also invited lecturers participate in these meetings.

At summer meetings they discuss the results of the defence of Master's theses, as well as the implementation of the study programme in general, including receiving proposals for the development of the study programme.

This activity allows strengthening "general identity" of the study programme (see Paragraph 1.3) not only by promoting general understanding of the implementation of the study programme and the achievement of learning outcomes, but also by reaching the aim of the study programme.

There are plans to further improve the content of the study programme in a targeted way through cooperation of the heads of the study programme with teaching staff and cooperation partners.

2.3. Assessment of the study implementation methods (including the evaluation methods)

by providing the analysis of how the study implementation methods (including the evaluation methods) used in the study courses/ modules are selected, what they are, and how they contribute to the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study courses and the aims of the study programme. Provide an explanation of how the student-centred principles are taken into account in the implementation of the study process.

The study programme has until now been implemented only as full-time studies in Latvian. In the future, the possibility of extending the possibilities for the implementation of the study programme and also attracting part-time and foreign students will be considered. The plan for part-time studies is attached in Annex 19. For foreign students, the only difference would be that the "Policy Planning and Evaluation" would be replaced by the study course "Latvian Language for Foreign Students" in Part A. The course to be replaced may be subject to change at the time of implementation in English.

The study process is implemented mostly as interactive lectures, practical interactive classes or seminars and independent work of students. All previously described advanced technologies available at RSU are used during lectures and classes. In several study courses lecturers also prepare handouts and other materials (which are also available in the e-environment).

During their studies at RSU, students have a possibility to ask questions they are interested in, discuss them with the lecturer and fellow students. Problem-centred teaching strategies are used for studies. All additional study materials are freely available to the students in e-studies environment. It also provides references to additional information sources for studying the specific issues, as well as materials for self-guided learning (for example, assignments that can be done at home with self-assessment algorithm). E-lectures are organised, if necessary, students get tasks to search for information on the internet, as well as work in teams – to prepare a joint project or a public relations campaign.

Study trips are organised at least once per study year, for example, when learning study courses on branding or modern social processes and therefore visiting a company or non-governmental organisation (for example, *ZERO WASTE*).

Both formative and summative evaluation is used in studies. The formative evaluation takes place during everyday study process: by asking control questions to the students during the contact lessons, as well as by discussing the independent works of students that are practised during the study process. The summative evaluation takes place at the conclusion of each study course as a test or examination. Summative evaluation tests are organised in a written form (in paper format or electronically) or as oral discussions. At the conclusion of the studies, the student selects a topic he or she is interested in and in cooperation with selected paper supervisor develops and defends the Master's thesis.

As already mentioned, at the end of each study course, students are asked to complete the evaluation survey in RSU e-environment, wherein they can express their opinion and provide proposals both regarding the content of the study course and the methods of implementation thereof, as well as competences and work style of the lecturers. Therefore, study courses are updated each year in accordance with the evaluation given by the students. Representatives of the students are also involved in the faculty council ensuring representation of the opinion in decision-making. There is regular (at least twice per semester – formal and daily – informal) communication with the heads of the study programme to discuss unclear matters, consult and support students in addition.

RSU practises student-centred education, providing that:

- an independently learning student is at the centre of the study process;
- learning outcomes are clearly formulated and known, and the student studies to achieve them;
- students know and understand the learning outcomes defined for the study programme or course;
- evaluation of the student's achievements is formed in a way that it is possible to ensure whether and at what level the planned learning outcomes have been achieved;
- the task of the teaching staff is to facilitate the studies of the student so that the student would achieve the set learning outcomes;
- it can be observed that the aggregate of outcomes of separate study courses forms the learning outcomes of the study programme.

Learning outcomes of the study programme are formulated in a student-centred way and:

- establish a unified understanding of students and teaching staff regarding the outcomes expected from the student at the end of the course or the programme;
- provide the students with the opportunity to study more effectively, i.e., students clearly know what knowledge and skills they will obtain if they successfully complete the respective course. The students can also track what they already have learned and what they still need to learn, and what is their progress towards achieving the outcomes of the programme;
- present a tool for the teaching staff to be able to organise the study process more effectively: lectures, seminars, group work, discussions, laboratory work, etc., by selecting topics and materials, as well as learning strategies in accordance with the learning outcomes specified for the study course or study programme;
- create a mutual understanding between the teaching staff and colleagues for achievement of which learning outcome the course is studied and the respective learning method is selected;
- identify those areas where certain types of learning outcomes overlap or lack (by comparing courses and compliance thereof with the programme);
- aid the students in their choice of courses to study in accordance with learning outcomes the student wishes to achieve;
- provide clear information for employers on knowledge and skills the students will have obtained, as well as provide an opportunity to assess this knowledge and skills in accordance with the defined professional qualification.

The study implementation and evaluation methods used foster the achievement of the results of study courses and the achievement of the set aim of the study programme.

2.4. If the study programme entails a traineeship, provide the analysis and assessment of the relation between the tasks of the traineeship included in the study programme and the learning outcomes of the study programme. Specify how the higher education institution/ college supports the students within the study programme regarding the fulfilment of the tasks set for students during the traineeship.

Not applicable.

2.5. Analysis and assessment of the topics of the final theses of the students, their relevance in the respective field, including the labour market, and the evaluations of the final theses.

Taking into account the interdisciplinary focus of the programme, topics of Master's theses (see Annex 22) are sufficiently extensive, at the same time sticking to the specifics of the communication science, because the degree in communication science is awarded.

Master's theses are developed taking into account the latest news in the industry, concentrating on communication and management problems in the public sector and challenges in the business sector.

Students mainly choose topics for their Master's theses themselves in cooperation with the heads of the study programme, who are able to recommend for the Master's thesis a supervisor, whose scope of interests includes the selected topic. If it is difficult to select a topic for a Master's thesis – consultations of the head of the study programme are always available. When lecturers are implementing study courses, they promote research of students, pay attention, if some topic for a Master's thesis is valuable.

Research interests of Master's students are, for instance, related to the latest developments in public communication, public awareness problems, depicting of different phenomena in the media, analysis of public relations campaigns and their management analysis, risk and crisis communication, organisation and customer management matters, impact of culture on communication, etc.

The results of the defence of Master's theses evidence that the level of Master's theses is mainly excellent or good. Therefore, several fragments from Master theses are published as scientific research (for example, "Academic Life", "Society and Culture", etc.), at least 10 Master students participated in conferences of RSU and other higher education institutions, students prepare a report on their Master's theses for the RSU Student Media.

Several graduates of the study programme – A. Grafs, J. Vīķe and others – published a number of scientific and popular scientific articles.

Several graduates of the study programme, such as A. Grafs, J. Vīķe and others, have published a number of scientific and popular science articles.

Analysis of Master's theses defended in recent years shows that Master's theses meet the requirements of RSU for the development of final papers. The average mark is 7.7. In 2018 and 2019, the average mark for the defended Master's theses was 8.

Annex 17.1 contains a table on the compliance of the study programme with the State Education Standard.

Annex 18.1 contains mapping of the study courses for the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study programme.

Annex 19 contains the curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme).

Annex 20 contains descriptions of the study courses of the study programme.

Annex 22: Topics of Master's theses.

2.6. Analysis and assessment of the outcomes of the surveys conducted among the students, graduates, and employers, and the use of these outcomes for the improvement of the content and quality of studies by providing the respective examples.

Surveys of students (surveys on the RSU portal) take place after the end of each study course and upon graduation from the study programme. For instance, in the academic year 2017/2018, 88% of students participated in the final survey of the study programme. These results were used when planning the next year of studies, in work with lecturers and supervisors of Master's theses and in the development of the study programme. In addition, feedback from students is obtained in regular meetings between the head of the study programme and students (at least twice per semester), as well as in electronic communication and also informally, when meeting, for example, during breaks or at RSU events.

If we evaluate the results of the evaluation of the study programme in the academic year 2017/2018 assessment, it can be stated that:

- 1) all the surveyed graduates are fully satisfied with the choice of RSU and the study programme, the implementation of the study programme, content and process of studies (except one), including the evaluation of studies, which is mainly fair and objective, learning outcomes (except one, who is partially satisfied), they are ready to recommend the study programme (which was confirmed by enrolment of two students in the study programme in the year of studies 2018/2019);
- 2) graduates are fully satisfied with the level of teaching (although opinions vary when evaluating the work of individual lecturers), material and technical provisions and premises of RSU (except one), information on the study programme, classes, availability of internet at RSU;
- 3) graduates evaluate in different ways (but generally positively) the offered visiting lectures, the availability of materials in the e-environment, as well as library resources, which is probably related to the fact that topics of Master's theses can be very different. Students appreciate the possibility of using scientific databases. Courses of part C (elective) received a comparatively lower evaluation with an indication that they are not directly related to the focus of PRSM.

During the implementation of the study programme, there have been cases where, following students' recommendations, the lecturer was replaced or a new study course was introduced following the initiative of students.

There were cases during the implementation of the study programme, when taking into account recommendations of students, a lecturer was changed or, based on an initiative of students, a new study course was introduced "Modern Communication Theories".

The level of trust to the study programme is also confirmed by the fact that four RSU employees (from other structural units) graduated from it, two graduates have become lecturers, three continue doctoral studies at RSU.

The general evaluation is that the head of the study programme is the main contact person in cooperation with students to solve problems (understand reasons, find a solution) or also work together on the development of the study programme, supporting to the extent possible each feasible initiative.

Cooperation with employers is also supported and developed, in particular with employers of students and in particular when selecting topics for a Master's thesis, for example, on the latest news in the EU, communication of the Competition Council, etc.

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It should be noted that a number of lecturers work in the sector on a daily basis, which means that they contribute significantly to the processes of the study programme development by representing the sector's viewpoint.

Surveys of employers show that they are more satisfied with graduates of the Study direction, at the same time expressing their desire for ready-made employees for the particular job/company and noting the need for those skills and knowledge directly developed by the study programme: Business/management thinking, foreign languages, an in-depth understanding of various sectors of the economy, financial analysis, planning, ability to learn, mental agility, purposefulness, ability to find the required information quickly, time management, communication skills, presentation skills, ability to think, analyse, express their point of view and draw conclusions, versatility, ability to absorb large amounts of information, and respond quickly to variable, versatile information perception.

At the same time, it should be noted that the study programme is academic. No placement is prescribed. Almost all students have a job. Some students admit that their studies are directly or indirectly supported by employers. However, there are cases (student conclusions) where the employer is not really interested in employee / student self-development because of competition and other risks.

2.7. Provide the assessment of the options of the incoming and outgoing mobility of the students, the dynamics of the number of the used opportunities, and the recognition of the study courses acquired during the mobility.

Taking into account that all the students of the study programme are working, it is difficult for them to go on exchange programmes. However, two students have used ERASMUS opportunities, three went on other exchange visits using AYPI and SEDA support. One student is planning to have *Erasmus* exchange in autumn 2019.

In accordance with the procedures specified by RSU, the learning of study courses outside the study programme is recognised by drawing up a recognition protocol.

See Annex 8.1./8.2.

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme)

3.1. Assessment of the compliance of the resources and provision (study provision, scientific support (if applicable), informative provision (including libraries), material and technical provision, and financial provision) with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the learning outcomes to be achieved by providing the respective examples. Whilst carrying out the assessment, it is possible to refer to the information provided for in the criteria set forth in Part II, Chapter 3, sub-paragraphs 3.1 to 3.3.

Resources and provisions (study facilities, research facilities (if applicable), information base (including libraries), material and technical base and financial base) are described in the description of the study direction, and they are equally available to all RSU study programmes. The RSU library is supplemented with latest scientific literature on a regular basis.

Overall, the range of material and technical resources is absolutely sufficient for qualitative implementation of the study programme.

Students in the Communication Study Direction and the respective study programme have the possibility to use the phot, audio and filming equipment at the disposal of the Department of Communications Studies, as well as the opportunity offered by student media.

3.2. Assessment of the study provision and scientific support, including the resources provided within the cooperation with other science institutes and institutions of higher education (applicable to the doctoral study programmes).

Not applicable.

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (4. Teaching Staff)

4.1. Analysis and assessment of the changes to the composition of the teaching staff over the reporting period and their impact on the study quality.

Highly-qualified academic staff is involved in the implementation of the study programme, who has extensive experience in teaching the study course, as well as practical work experience in the field. The capacity of RSU's elected academic staff (which has grown considerably since the previous accreditation, for example, I. J. Mihailovs and A. Laķe have obtained a doctoral degree, R. Siliņa and V. Savicka, as well as J. Vīķe study to obtain a doctoral degree) is perfectly supplemented by the teaching staff elected to an academic position in other higher education institutions or practically working. Communication specialist S. Meinerte, society integration expert L. Ose, professor of communication at Turiba University A. Pētersons, Doctor of Economics and scientific secretary of the LAS department L. Āzena are also involved in the implementation of the study programme.

In addition, doctoral students get involved in the implementation of the study programme, for example, the study course "Knowledge and Innovation Management" is read by J. Vīķe, the visiting lecture on statistical methods – by Diāna Kalniņa.

The development of academic and professional qualification of teaching staff fosters the quality of studies developing a modern study environment, the key words of which are "competence", "understanding of specifics of the industry", "ability to academically analyse professional problems".

4.2. Assessment of the compliance of the qualification of the teaching staff members (academic staff members, visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers, and visiting assistants) involved in the implementation of the study programme with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the provisions set out in the respective regulatory enactments. Provide information on how the qualification of the teaching staff members contributes to the achievement of the learning outcomes.

The qualifications of the academic staff involved in the study programme fully complies with the requirements of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education. Moreover, most of lecturers are practitioners well-known in the industry – opinion leaders, who are leading specialists in the field, to a known extent defining the development of the field of communication and communication education, for example, S. Kruks, D. Hanovs, A. Rožukalne, V. Savicka, R. Siliņa, L. Ose.

Qualifications of teaching staff, including academic and scientific work experience are evaluated as unique in Latvian conditions enabling to achieve learning outcomes of the programme with high-class specialists.

Qualifications of teaching staff are not only an important precondition for the quality of education, but also allow to develop a modern study environment promoting the integration of latest academic insights and study methods in the study process. For example, S. Kruks involves master students of the study programme into research problems on a regular basis, including contributing to their opportunity to continue with doctoral studies.

Visiting lecturers are invited on a regular basis during the implementation of the programme, for example, in 2018, there were visiting lectures in several study courses, including with attraction of foreign lecturers, for example, Oyvind Okland “Media and Globalisation, Media and Migration”, Deimantas Jastramskis “Media Policy and Media Regulation”. Students may also attend visiting lectures organised by RSU. For more information see the description of the study direction.

For more information see CVs of teaching staff in Annex 6.2, as well as information on publications in Annex 6.4.

4.3. Information on the number of the scientific publications of the academic staff members, involved in the implementation of the doctoral study programme, as published during the reporting period by listing the most significant publications published in Scopus or WoS CC indexed journals. As for the social sciences, humanitarian sciences, and the science of art, the scientific publications published in ERIH+ indexed journals may be additionally specified (if applicable).

Not applicable.

4.4. Information on the participation of the academic staff, involved in the implementation of the doctoral study programme, in scientific projects as project managers or prime contractors/ subproject managers/ leading researchers by specifying the name of the relevant project, as well as the source and the amount of the funding. Provide information

on the reporting period (if applicable).

Not applicable.

4.5. Provide examples of the involvement of the academic staff in the scientific research and/or artistic creation activities both at national and at international level (in the fields related to the content of the study programme), as well as the use of the obtained information in the study process.

Teaching staff of the study programme actively conducts scientific research work at national and international level. Achievements include participation in the EKOSOC scientific project (S. Kruks, S. Mihailova), several projects of the specific objective (SO; I.J. Mihailovs), other international and national projects (D. Hanovs, R. Siliņa, V. Savicka, A. Laķe, etc.). Several lecturers publish regularly in scientific editions, including are authors or co-authors of monographs (S. Kruks, D. Hanovs, I. J. Mihailovs, S. Mihailova, A. Rožukalne, etc.), by their activity not only popularising RSU, the Faculty of Communication and the study programme, but also allowing to use them in the study process; in particular it is worth to mention "Scientific Writing and Dissemination of Research Results", "Pluralism Anxiety. Acting Socially in Latvia", as well as several entries in the Latvian National Encyclopaedia and its printed volume "Latvia".

The results of lecturers' research work (especially monographs) are directly used in the study process. For example, the monograph on crisis communication published in the co-authorship by R.Siliņa is basically the only edition in Latvian and is used accordingly in the course she teaches. D. Hanov's Monographs (see the List of Publications) are supporting instruments in the study course "Theory of Culture". S. Mihailova has participated in a number of publications on psychology (especially related to personality, social and health psychology) and counselling, and these publications are used as supporting materials for the study courses "Social and Management Psychology" and "Conflict Management and Staff Counselling". S. Kruk's works are used in learning of various aspects of global communication (as materials for seminars) I.J. Mihailovs has participated in the creation of three books on scientific writing and drafting of research papers. These publications are basic means for mastering the methodology of research work in all institutions of higher education in Latvia. V. Savicka's article in the journal "Akadēmiskā dzīve" (*Academic Life*) has aroused interest and was used for drafting several Master's theses, etc.

4.6. Assessment of the cooperation between the teaching staff members by specifying the mechanisms used to promote the cooperation and ensure the interrelation between the study courses/ modules. Specify also the proportion of the number of the students and the teaching staff within the study programme (at the moment of the submission of the Self-Assessment Report).

Cooperation of the teaching staff is promoted within the scope of implementation of the study programme in a targeted way by organising an annual meeting for teaching staff and offering to

attend faculty and RSU seminars on the latest news in studies. In addition, the teaching staff is also invited to faculty council meetings, where matters of professional improvement, planned academic and scientific activity, mutual cooperation of the teaching staff, and other important matters affecting the study process and its improvement are discussed.

Several members of teaching staff cooperate by jointly implementing study courses, supervising student papers, as well as performing an academic activity, for example, "Knowledge and Innovation Management" is jointly taught by A. Berdņikovs and the candidate for a doctoral degree J. Vīķe, who graduated from the study programme, prof. D. Hanovs and Assist. Prof. I. J. Mihailovs have jointly developed and implemented to study courses.

Regular (every year) informing of teaching staff on the results of the student survey, as well observation of lectures by the heads of the study programme, during which important study quality matters are discussed, are not less important.

Mutual cooperation among members of teaching staff is promoted by the heads of the study programme by seeing that study courses are updated and by maintaining regular communication with teaching staff and communicating on a daily basis to resolve issues related to the study process.

Cooperation among teaching staff is evaluated as an important precondition for the creation of a modern and qualitative study environment. It is still being developed by strengthening better understanding of aims and outcomes of studies, as well as the study programme in general.

When calculating the total number of lecturers, as indicated in the accreditation documents of the study programme, the total number of lecturers involved in the implementation of the programme is 24, while the total number of students was 26 on 3 October 2019, so the ratio of students and lecturers is 1.08. It should be noted that part of the study courses is taught together for students of several master's study programmes, thereby sharing resources. The joint implementation of study courses strengthens the financial cost-effectiveness of study programmes and supports interdisciplinary cooperation between students.

See for more information: Description of the Study Direction, Section II, paragraphs 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6.

Annexes

III. Description of the Study Programme - 1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme		
Compliance of the joint study programme with the provisions of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (table)		
Statistics on the students over the reporting period	16_pielik_SSAM_Statistika_eng.pdf	16_pielik_SSAM_Statistika_lv.pdf
III. Description of the Study Programme - 2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof		
Compliance of the study programme with the State Education Standard	17.1_pielik_Atbiest_lzgl_Stand_eng.pdf	17.1_pielik_Atbiest_lzgl_Stand_lv.pdf
Compliance of the qualification to be acquired upon completion of the study programme with the professional standard (if applicable)		
Compliance of the study programme with the specific regulatory framework applicable to the relevant field (if applicable)		
Mapping of the study courses/ modules for the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study programme	18.1_pielik_StK_StR_kartejums_eng.pdf	18.1_pielik_StK_StR_kartejums_lv.pdf
Curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme)	19_pielik_SSAV_planojums_ENG.pdf	19_pielik_SSAV_planojums_LV.pdf
Descriptions of the study courses/ modules	20_pielik_SSAV_StK_EN.pdf	20_pielik_SSAV_StK_LV.pdf
Description of the Study Direction - Other mandatory attachments		
Sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme.	24-1_AMSP_SSAV_diploms_gatavs_ENG.pdf	24-1_AMSP_SSAM_diploms_gatavs.pdf
Description of the Study Programme - Other mandatory attachments		
Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college will provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme or at another higher education institution/ college (a contract with another accredited higher education institution/ college), in case the implementation of the study programme is discontinued	24.2_pielikums_Apliecinajums_par_citu_StP_IKZ_parakstits_tulk.pdf	24.2_pielikums_Apliecinajums_par_citu_StP_IKZ_parakstits.pdf
Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college guarantees to the students a compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the higher education institution/ college (actions or failure to act) and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme	24.3_pielikums_Apliecinajums_par_zaudejumiem_IKZ_parakstits_eng.pdf	24.3_pielikums_Apliecinajums_par_zaudejumiem_IKZ_parakstits.pdf
Confirmation of the higher education institution/ college that the teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language according to European language levels (see the levels under www.europass.lv), if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language.	24.5_pielik_Apliecin_anglu_val_StV_IKZ_parakstits_eng.pdf	24.5_pielik_Apliecin_anglu_val_StV_IKZ_parakstits.pdf
If the study programmes in the study direction subject to the assessment are doctoral study programmes, a confirmation that at least five teaching staff members with doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field or sub-field of science, in which the study programme has intended to award a scientific degree.		
If academic study programmes are implemented within the study direction, a document confirming that the academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the provisions set out in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause three of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education	24-7_pielik_apliecinajums_AMSP_SSAV_eng.pdf	24-7_pielik_apliecinajums_AMSP_lv.pdf
Sample (or samples) of the study agreement	24.8_pielik_Studiju_lig_eng.pdf	24.8_pielik_Studiju_lig_lv.pdf
If academic study programmes for less than 250 full-time students are implemented within the study direction, the opinion of the Council for Higher Education shall be attached in compliance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.	24.9_pielik_AIP_atzinums_eng.pdf	24.9_pielik_AIP_atzin_lv.pdf

Multimedia Communication

Title of the higher education institution	<i>Information and Communication Sciences</i>
ProcedureStudyProgram.Name	<i>Multimedia Communication</i>
Education classification code	<i>43321</i>
Type of the study programme	<i>Academic bachelor study programme</i>
Name of the study programme director	<i>Alnis</i>
Surname of the study programme director	<i>Stakle</i>
E-mail of the study programme director	<i>alnis.stakle@rsu.lv</i>
Title of the study programme director	<i>Dr. paed.</i>
Phone of the study programme director	
Goal of the study programme	<i>The aim is to train Bachelors of Social Sciences in communication science who have professional skills in multimedia project implementation and who orient themselves in media work principles, media economics, can analyse and forecast public policy processes, professionally participate in production of various types of multimedia, have theoretical and practical knowledge of using cinema, television, Internet and music in advertising, media management and public relations; and are able to evaluate the operating principles of other multimedia projects. To prepare academically educated and professionally qualified multimedia specialists who would be able not only to compete in the labour market of diverse business sectors, but also to implement their ideas independently, critically and skilfully, based on the acquired theoretical knowledge and practical skills, and improve the use of multimedia in various fields in Latvia.</i>
Tasks of the study programme	<i>Objectives of the study programme "Multimedia Communication" are to provide students with the following: 1) theoretical knowledge in philosophy, politics, economics, sociology, psychology necessary for a successful understanding of the processes of societal development and orientation in the social environment; 2) theoretical knowledge of various communication science subjects and communication research methods; 3) basics of digital culture; 4) basics of digital design and image communication, principles of multimedia project dramaturgy; 5) principles of productions of films, photography, television, Internet, music, sports, entertainment and other multimedia projects; 6) peculiarities of Internet media communication and approaches of other media, as well as the psychology of communication; 7) good knowledge of Latvian and foreign languages; 8) the ability to present one's ideas, to speak in front of an audience, and to use different communication approaches; 9) skills for conducting scientific research and main methods thereof; 10) skills for the use of modern communication technologies.</i>

Results of the study programme	<p>1) Understanding and knowledge of the applied applications of multimedia communication in the field of communication, as well as a critical view of the aspects of multimedia in communication theories</p> <p>2) Ability to use multimedia technologies in the implementation, consulting and research of practical multimedia communication projects</p> <p>3) Knowledge of multimedia capabilities in cinema, television, Internet media, as well as in arts, music, other cultural disciplines and entertainment management</p> <p>4) Understanding of the regularities of multimedia communication and having advanced skills in using multimedia technologies.</p> <p>5) Upon graduation from the programme, a multimedia communication specialist will be able to: plan and manage content creation processes for multimedia projects, both individually and as a team; take responsibility for decision making in unpredictable working conditions; obtain, select and analyse information and use it independently; make decisions and solve problems in the field of communication science and in the daily work of a multimedia communication professional; demonstrate understanding of the professional ethics of multimedia communication; evaluate the impact of their professional activities on society, participate in the academic and applied development of the field of multimedia communication.</p> <p>6) Ability to take responsibility for decision making in unpredictable working conditions; to obtain, select and analyse information and use it independently; to make decisions and solve problems in the field of communication science and in the daily work of a professional</p> <p>7) Demonstrating understanding of the professional ethics of communication. Ability to evaluate the impact of one's professional activities on society, as well as to participate in the academic and applied development of multimedia communication.</p> <p>8) Demonstrating high-level competence in using communication theories and research methods to analyse verbal, visual and multimodal messages as part of culture.</p> <p>9) Understanding the principles of media operations, mass media economics, ability to analyse and predict communication processes in a broader context and work in the field of multimedia communication, professional participation in the production and consulting of various types of multimedia; theoretical and practical knowledge of the applications of cinema, photography, television, Internet and music in multimedia communication, ability to use their knowledge and skills in mass media and social network management and public relations, as well as apply the acquired knowledge in multimedia project activities of other fields</p>
Final examination upon the completion of the study programme	Bachelor's thesis

Study programme forms

Full time studies - 3 years - latvian

Study type and form	Full time studies
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Duration in full years	3
Duration in month	0
Language	latvian
Amount (CP)	120
Admission requirements (in English)	<p>Secondary education; CE certificate in Latvian; CE certificate in Mathematics, CE certificate in a foreign language or an examination document of an international testing institution. For foreign applicants • Completed secondary education attested by originals or certified copies of the secondary education diploma and official transcript. • Final/Last secondary school semester and exam grades included in the secondary school leaving diploma and the official transcript in compulsory subjects – mathematics, English (results of the internationally recognised English test are also allowed for submission). Should the management of the study programme decide to offer the study programme in English medium to international applicants, additional compulsory subjects can be added to the ones mentioned above. (Unsatisfactory grades are not admissible in any of the subjects included in the diploma and the official transcript (in conformity with the secondary education grading scale of the respective country)). • Two recommendation letters. • Applicant's motivation letter.</p>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	Bachelor of Social Sciences in Communication Science
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Rīga Stradiņš University	RĪGA	DZIRCIEMA IELA 16, KURZEMES RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1007
Liepāja branch of Rīga Stradiņš University	LIEPĀJA	RIŅĶU IELA 24/26, LIEPĀJA, LV-3405

Part time studies - 4 years - latvian

Study type and form	Part time studies
Duration in full years	4
Duration in month	0
Language	latvian
Amount (CP)	120

Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Secondary education; CE certificate in Latvian; CE certificate in Mathematics, CE certificate in a foreign language or an examination document of an international testing institution. For foreign applicants • Completed secondary education attested by originals or certified copies of the secondary education diploma and official transcript. • Final/Last secondary school semester and exam grades included in the secondary school leaving diploma and the official transcript in compulsory subjects – mathematics, English (results of the internationally recognised English test are also allowed for submission). Should the management of the study programme decide to offer the study programme in English medium to international applicants, additional compulsory subjects can be added to the ones mentioned above. (Unsatisfactory grades are not admissible in any of the subjects included in the diploma and the official transcript (in conformity with the secondary education grading scale of the respective country)). • Two recommendation letters. • Applicant's motivation letter.</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Bachelor of Social Sciences in Communication Science</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Rīga Stradiņš University	RĪGA	DZIRCIEMA IELA 16, KURZEMES RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1007
Liepāja branch of Rīga Stradiņš University	LIEPĀJA	RIŅĶU IELA 24/26, LIEPĀJA, LV-3405

Part time studies - 4 years - english

Study type and form	<i>Part time studies</i>
Duration in full years	<i>4</i>
Duration in month	<i>0</i>
Language	<i>english</i>
Amount (CP)	<i>120</i>
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Secondary education; CE certificate in Latvian; CE certificate in Mathematics, CE certificate in a foreign language or an examination document of an international testing institution. For foreign applicants • Completed secondary education attested by originals or certified copies of the secondary education diploma and official transcript. • Final/Last secondary school semester and exam grades included in the secondary school leaving diploma and the official transcript in compulsory subjects – mathematics, English (results of the internationally recognised English test are also allowed for submission). Should the management of the study programme decide to offer the study programme in English medium to international applicants, additional compulsory subjects can be added to the ones mentioned above. (Unsatisfactory grades are not admissible in any of the subjects included in the diploma and the official transcript (in conformity with the secondary education grading scale of the respective country)). • Two recommendation letters. • Applicant's motivation letter.</i>

Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Bachelor of Social Sciences in Communication Science</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Rīga Stradiņš University	RĪGA	DZIRCIEMA IELA 16, KURZEMES RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1007
Liepāja branch of Rīga Stradiņš University	LIEPĀJA	RIŅĶU IELA 24/26, LIEPĀJA, LV-3405

Full time studies - 3 years - english

Study type and form	<i>Full time studies</i>
Duration in full years	<i>3</i>
Duration in month	<i>0</i>
Language	<i>english</i>
Amount (CP)	<i>120</i>
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Secondary education; CE certificate in Latvian; CE certificate in Mathematics, CE certificate in a foreign language or an examination document of an international testing institution. For foreign applicants • Completed secondary education attested by originals or certified copies of the secondary education diploma and official transcript. • Final/Last secondary school semester and exam grades included in the secondary school leaving diploma and the official transcript in compulsory subjects – mathematics, English (results of the internationally recognised English test are also allowed for submission). Should the management of the study programme decide to offer the study programme in English medium to international applicants, additional compulsory subjects can be added to the ones mentioned above. (Unsatisfactory grades are not admissible in any of the subjects included in the diploma and the official transcript (in conformity with the secondary education grading scale of the respective country)). • Two recommendation letters. • Applicant's motivation letter.</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Bachelor of Social Sciences in Communication Science</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Rīga Stradiņš University	RĪGA	DZIRCIEMA IELA 16, KURZEMES RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1007
Liepāja branch of Rīga Stradiņš University	LIEPĀJA	RIŅĶU IELA 24/26, LIEPĀJA, LV-3405

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme)

1.1. Description and analysis of changes in study programme parameters that have taken place since the issue of the previous accreditation certificate of study direction or the license of study programme if study programme is not included in the accreditation page of the study direction

Nr.	Parameter	Analysis of changes
1.	Study direction	—
2.	Name of the study programme	—
3.	Code of the study programme in accordance with the Latvian Education Classification	—
4.	Director of the study programme	New head of the study programme has been appointed to continue the development of the programme and introduce new content and approaches to its implementation with regard to its content and management.
5.	Scientific degree of the head of the study programme	—
6.	Aim of the study programme	—
7.	Objectives of the study programme	—
8.	Learning outcomes to be achieved	Learning outcomes have been updated to reflect the current essence of the study programme more accurately and testify to the conformity of the study programme to the requirements of the 6th level of LQF/EQF and current trends in the fields of communication and information sciences.
9.	Final examination upon the completion of the study programme	—

Nr.	Parameter	Analysis of changes
10.	Form and type of the study programme	—
11.	Duration of the study programme	—
12.	Language in which the study programme is implemented	During the course of accreditation, it is intended to add English as a language of instruction, although there are currently no specific plans to start offering studies in English. In conformity with the development plan of the study direction (see Annex 4.1), it is planned to set up a work group to discuss the opportunities for expanding the implementation of the study programme.
13.	Amount of the study programme (CP, preferably also ECTS)	—
14.	Admission requirements	—
15.	The degree, to be awarded	—
16.	The professional qualification to be awarded	—
17.	Place of implementation	So far, the study programme has only been implemented in Riga, but in accordance with the plan for the development of the study direction (see Annex 4.1) it is planned to set up a workgroup to evaluate the possibilities for implementation of study programmes and to model their implementation plan at RSU Liepaja branch. The material and technical facilities of the branch and RSU as a whole are adequate for its implementation.

1.2. Analysis and assessment of the statistical data on the students of the respective study programme, the dynamics of the number of the students, and the factors affecting

the changes to the number of the students. The analysis shall be broken down in the different study forms, types, and languages.

A total number of students is stable without significant changes to the number of full-time and part-time students. It is complicated to obtain statistically significant data on factors determining the change to the number of students, as often true reasons for quitting the studies remain unknown. Although RSU has developed a quality student survey system and the university maintains close contacts with the students, still peculiarities of modern lifestyle determine students' approach towards study process. A significant number of students are employers or self-employed persons even during their first years of studies that, of course, has an impact on their capacity to fully participate in the study process.

Poor academic performance and inability to pay the tuition fee are the main factors determine the number of **full-time students** (see Annex 16). Quitting the studies at their own initiative is among the most significant factors that often might be associated with the change of the students' financial situation, job or place of residence. However, numbers with regard to the factors leading to the quitting the studies differ significantly each year. This most likely points to the combination of several random factors determining the students' choice. However, there is a positive total tendency for the total number of students quitting their studies to decrease. For example, 35% of students quit their studies in the academic year 2014/2015, while in the academic year 2018/2019 - 15%.

Poor academic performance and inability to pay the tuition fee are the main factors determine the number of **part-time students** (see Annex 16). Similarly to full-time studies, quitting the studies at their own initiative is among the most significant factors that often might be associated with the change of the students' financial situation, job or place of residence. However, numbers with regard to the factors leading to the quitting the studies differ significantly each year. This most likely points to the combination of several random factors determining the students' choice. The average drop-out rate is 30%, however, there is a tendency for the total number of students to become stable and slightly grow.

See Annex 16 for statistical data on students during the reporting period.

1.3. Analysis and assessment of the interrelation between the name of the study programme, the degree or professional qualification to be acquired or the degree and professional qualification to be acquired, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and the admission requirements.

Veiktā studiju programmas un studiju kursu rezultātu kartēšana ļauj konstatēt, ka studiju programma un studiju kursi atbilst EKI/LKI 6. līmenim un normatīvajos aktos noteiktajām prasībām un nodrošina studentcentrētu pieeju. Studiju kursu rezultāti pārsvarā ir savstarpēji atbilstoši un loģiski saistīti. Studiju programmas nosaukums, iegūstamais grāds, studiju mērķis, uzdevumi un studiju rezultāti ir savstarpēji saistīti.

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (2. The Content of

Studies and Implementation Thereof)

2.1. Assessment of the relevance of the content of the study course/ module and the compliance with the needs of the relevant industry and labour market and with the trends in science. Provide information on how and whether the content of the study course/ module is updated in line with the development trends of the relevant industry, labour market, and science. In case of master's and doctoral study programmes, specify and provide the justification as to whether the degrees are awarded in view of the developments and findings in the field of science or artistic creation.

The academic Bachelor's study programme "Multimedia Communication" provides general courses in the social sciences including **the guidelines, principles, structure and methodology of the respective field** (introduction to communication theories, introduction to the studies and speciality, psychology of communication, intercultural communication, history of communication, photography as communication, media language, mass communication theories, history of ideas etc.). In total, the study courses providing the abovementioned knowledge, skills and competence are included in the compulsory part or part A of the study programme and comprise 72 CP.

Courses providing general and specialised knowledge in the **history and current issues** of multimedia (documentary films, basics of media planning, cultural and communication processes of the 20th century in Europe and Latvia, communication law and ethics, digital display, producer's work, etc.), which are included in part B and comprise 46 CP. This part includes study courses that reveal the characterisation of multimedia as a branch or sub-branch of communication science and problems in a cross-disciplinary perspective, such as visual anthropology, photography in contemporary art, animation, video and other audiovisual media types, formats and archives of electronic media, etc.

The study process also supports and ensures the development of students' research competences by offering courses in qualitative and quantitative research methods (social research methods, qualitative research methods, seminar of Bachelor's thesis, etc.). Research skills and abilities are also improved in the process of development of one final paper (4 CP), one course paper (4 CP) and Bachelor's thesis (20 CP). Together these papers amount to 28 CP.

Elective study courses constitute 2 CP.

According to the regulations on the national standard of academic education, "Civil Defence and Environmental Protection" is included as a compulsory course (2 CP); as well as in accordance with the regulations of the national standard of academic education, the amount of contact hours in the study programme is not less than 40% of the amount of Bachelor's study programme (except for the amount intended for the placement and Bachelor's thesis).

The academic Bachelor's study programme "Multimedia Communication" is designed with cross-curricular content links in mind, ensuring continuity in the curriculum. Of particular importance in the study programme is the students' independent work, as well as the versatile improvement of knowledge and skills, and consequently the evaluation system, which facilitates intensive research work throughout the study process and ends with the development and defence of the Bachelor's thesis. Alongside the development of research skills, the emphasis of the study programme is on the acquisition and improvement of professional skills and competence in multimedia, promoted through the acquisition of academic study content in the context of good practice, practical

research and production projects, collaborating with specific companies in the multimedia industry during the study placement.

The content of the study programme is regularly updated taking into account the current events in the field of communication science and multimedia, the peculiarities of the media market and contemporary trends of communication services. Visiting lecturers and experts from the multimedia, media and communication sectors are regularly involved in the study process. The content of the study courses is developed taking into consideration the opinion of the placement cooperation companies on the quality and content of studies, as well as student assessments of the study process and the quality of specific study courses; for example, Student Media (www.skalak.rsu.lv) has been created to bring placement in the media environment closer to the study environment, which functions as a simulation-based learning environment, where each student is required to master the specifics of media communication, editorial work, basic journalism and to gain simulated editorial experience working in groups and individually on media story production.

2.2. Assessment of the interrelation between the information included in the study courses/ modules, the intended learning outcomes, the set aims and other indicators, the relation between the aims of the study course/ module and the aims and intended outcomes of the study programme. In case of a doctoral study programme, provide a description of the main research roadmaps and the impact of the study programme on research and other education levels.

The aims and intended outcomes of the study courses are closely related to the overall aims and intended outcomes of the study programme. Study course content planning is regularly collectively evaluated (at department meetings), re-planned and updated taking into account the programme development vision and current events in the field of communication.

The aims to be achieved and outcomes of the study programme are based on the knowledge, skills and competence acquired in the study courses. Outcomes of the study programme are achieved:

- thanks to the involvement of **high-level teaching staff** who are either professors in the field of communication and are experts in the theoretical aspects of the field or practitioners in the field of communication and photography. For example, visiting lecturer Arnis Balčus (editor of "FK" magazine, commissioner of Riga Photo Festival), Assistant Professor Alnis Stakle (editor of photo books, curator of Riga Photo Festival), Assistant Professor Dita Rietuma (director of the National Film Centre, film critic), Professor Sergejs Kruks (semiotician, expert in media and culture), Professor Anda Rožukalne (expert in journalism, media literacy and media politics), Professor Deniss Hanovs (expert in cultural history and theory);
- the link **between the study programme and the business environment** is achieved because it is obligatory during the studies to complete a placement (8 CP) in a study content related company, which is the media, communication agencies, various public and private companies (Delfi, Tvnet, LSM, MRS group, Vides filmu studija, MTG, Latvian National Museum of Art, etc.) that require experts in static imagery;
- **the simulation-based learning environment** provides invaluable support in the acquisition of the students' practical competence needed to produce visual and verbal stories in the mass media environment. In order to create the simulation-based learning

environment required for the study programme, student media has been created (<http://skalak.rsu.lv/>). Each academic year, students practice in the student media for at least 2 CP, getting insight into editorial work, group work on journalism projects, audiovisual content production skills, and critical skills through peer review;

- **acquisition of academic and applied skills** is mutually balanced in the curriculum, including both the development of research competences and the acquisition of applied audiovisual production skills. In the first year of studies, students write a final paper (4 CP), which must be completed with an applied product (photo story, short film, radio broadcast, website development, etc.); in the second year of studies, students write a course paper (4 CP), which must be done as an empirical study, while in the third year of studies students write a Bachelor's thesis (20 CP), where they can select the academic and applied direction.

This study programme is created based on the current issues and problems of the public communication and multimedia industry in Latvia, the need for educational innovations, national development strategies and cultural policy tasks, labour market development perspectives in the context of European Union and Latvian society development. The topicality of the study programme is determined by several factors closely related to the development of the social, political, cultural and economic environment in Latvia:

- the crucial role of different levels and types of communication and multimedia content processes in promoting civil and democratic society in Latvia;
- development and popularity of new digital imaging, image exchange and information and communication technologies;
- the emergence of technology-based virtual communities and innovative mechanisms for creation of multimedia content, unprecedented information channels, and information storage strategies that define the peculiarities of the evolution of communication environment, which require professionals capable of competently and responsibly employing various communication techniques, approaches and tools in the field of multimedia;
- the international nature of the business and cultural environment affected by the availability and diffusion of technology;
- the overlap and convergence of social networks, mass communication and educational processes, resulting in a change in the visual communication structure of the mediated society;
- the use of multimedia in business, education, art and culture, everyday life and in other areas of public activity;
- challenges of the knowledge society in the context of visual culture, social issues, cultural development and education;
- the special importance of mass communication and multimedia in shaping the values orientation of young people today;
- the role of multimedia in communication processes and their relation with the internal market and the promotion of business, etc.

Accenting that processes in the information society in all areas of life rely heavily on transformations in communication processes, and that the lack of education, knowledge and information on the use of multimedia in communication deepens the social, political, and economic problems in Latvia, the RSU academic Bachelor's study programme "Multimedia Communication" is designed to offer innovative, holistic and in-depth study content improving theoretical and practical skills relevant to current trends in the field of multimedia communication in Europe and globally, as

well as to educate and create a learning environment for skilled, highly qualified, competent and competitive communication professionals in the field of multimedia who are ready to work independently and in groups specialising in multimedia, in the fields of public relations, journalism, communication research and online media creation in Latvia and other European Union countries.

2.3. Assessment of the study implementation methods (including the evaluation methods) by providing the analysis of how the study implementation methods (including the evaluation methods) used in the study courses/ modules are selected, what they are, and how they contribute to the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study courses and the aims of the study programme. Provide an explanation of how the student-centred principles are taken into account in the implementation of the study process.

So far the study programme has been implemented in the form of full-time and part-time studies with Latvian as a language of instruction. The opportunity to expand the opportunities for the implementation of the study programme and attract international students has been discussed. Annex 19 contains the schedule for part-time studies. In the schedule for international students the study course “Advertising” would be substituted with the study course “Latvian for International Students” in the Part A. The study course to be substituted is subject to change at the moment of the implementation of the programme in English.

Study process is implemented mostly as interactive lectures, practical interactive classes or seminars and independent work of students. All advanced technologies available at RSU are used in both lectures and classes.

During their studies at RSU, students can ask questions they are interested in, discuss them with the lecturer and fellow students. Problem-centred teaching strategies are used for studies. All additional study materials are freely available to the students in the e-studies environment. It also provides references to additional information sources for studying the specific issues, as well as materials for self-guided learning (for example, practical assignments that can be done at home with self-assessment algorithm).

Both formative and summative evaluation is used in the studies. Formative evaluation takes place during everyday study process: by asking control questions to the students during the contact lessons, as well as by discussing the independent works of students that are practised during the study process. Summative evaluation takes place at the conclusion of each study course as a test or examination. Summative evaluation tests are organised in a written form (in paper format or electronically) or as oral discussions. At the conclusion of studies, the student selects a topic they are interested in and writes and defends a Bachelor’s thesis in cooperation with the selected supervisor.

As already mentioned, by the end of each academic year, students are asked to complete the evaluation survey in the RSU e-environment, where they can express their opinion and provide proposals both regarding the content of the study course and the methods of implementation thereof, as well as the competence and work style of the lecturers. Therefore, study courses are updated each year in accordance with the evaluation given by the students. Student representatives are also involved in faculty councils ensuring representation of their opinion in decision-making.

In general, RSU practises student-centred education, providing that:

- an independently learning student is at the centre of the study process;
- learning outcomes are clearly formulated and known, and the student studies to achieve them;
- students know and understand the intended learning outcomes of the study programme or course;
- evaluation of the student's achievements is formed in a way that it is possible to check whether and at what level the planned learning outcomes have been achieved;
- task of the teaching staff is to facilitate the study process of the student so that the student achieves the set learning outcomes;
- it can be observed that aggregate of outcomes of separate study courses forms the learning outcomes of the study programme.

Learning outcomes of the study programme are formulated in a student-centred way and they:

- establish a unified understanding of students and teaching staff regarding of what is expected from the student at the end of the course or the programme;
- provide the students with an opportunity to study more effectively, i.e., students clearly know what knowledge and skills they will obtain if they successfully complete the respective course. The students can also track what they have learned already and what they still need to learn, and what is their progress towards achieving the outcomes of the programme;
- present a tool for the teaching staff to be able to organise the study process more effectively: lectures, seminars, group work, discussions, laboratory work, etc., selecting topics and materials, as well as teaching strategies in accordance with the learning outcomes set for the study course or study programme;
- create a mutual understanding between the teaching staff and colleagues regarding for achievement of which learning outcome the course is studied, and the respective learning method is selected;
- identify the areas where certain types of learning outcomes overlap or lack (by comparing courses and compliance thereof with the programme);
- aid the students in selecting, which courses to study in accordance with the learning outcomes the student wishes to achieve;
- provide clear information for employers on the knowledge and skills the students have acquired, as well as provide an opportunity to assess this knowledge and skills in accordance with the defined professional qualification.

The study implementation and evaluation methods applied contribute to the achievement of the study course results and the aim set for the study programme.

The creation of the study programme, the study process and the preparation of documentation for accreditation have been in line with Section 1(8) of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (1 CP corresponds to 40 academic hours of work (one week of studies)). Paragraph 9 of the Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No. 240 "Regulations on the National Standard of Academic Education" provides that contact hours make up no less than 40% of a Bachelor's study programme in full-time studies (except for the amount intended for placement and writing of the Bachelor's thesis).

Full-time programme

Semester	Credit points				Contact hours per CP
	A	B	C	Total	Total
1	16	4	0	20	45%
2	14	6	0	20	42%
3	10	8	2	20	38%
4	12	8	0	20	40%
5	2	18	0	20	34%
6	20	0	0	20	
Total:	74	44	2	120	41%

In full-time (FT) planning, the amount of contact hours makes 40% of the study programme.

In order to enrich the content of the study programme, in addition to contact hours in the form of lectures and seminars several other education format are implemented, which provide students with experiences related to the multimedia industry. In accordance with aims of the study programme students are involved in different events outside the university, the content of which affects the communication industry, multimedia and visual culture in general. Different activities ensuring communication with experts of the photography and communication industry, events and companies are planned within each study course:

1. **Participation in the RSU Research Week** is mandatory for all students, which includes attendance of RSU international conference events, lectures, discussions and workshops. After attendance of sessions, students contemplate on the obtained knowledge in home assignments and independent work, reflecting the latest scientific and practical insights into trends of the multimedia communication industry;
2. The amount of **individual consultations** within each study course varies and is related to the amount of the study course in CP, the complexity of content and the opinions expressed in interviews of students of the course. During individual consultations topical matters from study course lectures, independent work and home assignments, latest literature are discussed;
3. **Visits to companies and visiting lectures of communication experts.** Every year students attend several communication companies and media (LSM, SIA *Fineartprint*, Delfi, etc.) or also meet representatives of companies during specifically organised visiting lectures. Every year there are also unscheduled visiting lectures of artists, *Erasmus* teachers, professors from foreign universities and politicians, which are offered by different embassies, companies, art and cultural festivals;
4. **Topical events in the multimedia and communication sector.** The International Film Festival ARSENAL, the Riga International Film Festival RIGA IFF, the Festival of Contemporary Art RIBOCA, the Festival of Experimental Music Skaņu mežs, the Conversation Festival LAMPA are the main annual events. Overall, these events provide a broad general picture of the developments in communication, art, multimedia and visual culture, which significantly

enrich learning experience of students as they attend exhibitions, lectures of international experts, seminars and workshops. The study process includes academic and artistic activities of these events.

Students contemplate on the ideas learned at **visiting lectures** in home assignments and independent work. **Individual consultations** in each study course after each covered topic promote individual approach with regard to each student and with regard to profound understanding of photography and the communication industry. **Individual consultations** are organised immediately after the class in an auditorium (lecture or seminar) or department, upon individual agreement, or, taking into account experience, also by phone and e-mail, contacting about different matters related to the course content and individual studies.

For more detailed planned distribution of contact hours beyond lectures and classes see the table.

Additional contact hours		
Learning activities	Semester	Contact hours
Individual consultations	1	48
Individual consultations	2	40
Individual consultations	3	18
Individual consultations	4	22
Individual consultations	5	6
Research Week	1	20
Visit to a company	2	25
Visiting lecture of communication experts	4	8
Visit to a company	4	25
Visiting lecture of communication experts	4	8
Topical events in the multimedia and communication sector	2	15
Topical events in the multimedia and communication sector	4	15
Topical events in the multimedia and communication sector	6	15

Study process for part-time regular studies takes place on Saturdays in conformity with current semester schedule and the number of contact hours that has been precisely indicated in study course descriptions (Annex 20). Aims, objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme are identical to those of regular studies. The duration of part-time studies is longer, i.e., 4 years of

studies, the student has to acquire at least 15 CP per each semester. The amount of credit points obtained for study courses, final paper, semester paper, placement and Bachelor's thesis is identical to the amount to be obtained during full-time studies. In addition to academic staff, support staff, IT Department, RSU Library provides quality study process to part-time students by ensuring their services also on Saturdays. Lecturers are available for consultations held also on Saturdays.

2.4. If the study programme entails a traineeship, provide the analysis and assessment of the relation between the tasks of the traineeship included in the study programme and the learning outcomes of the study programme. Specify how the higher education institution/ college supports the students within the study programme regarding the fulfilment of the tasks set for students during the traineeship.

The following organisations and structures are used for the placement: advertising and public relations agencies, event agencies, advertising, public relations and communications departments in various organizations, Internet media, digital platforms for broadcasting and printed media, producer groups and studios of various media formats, online project creators, creators of art and communication projects.

Placement objectives: participating in the implementation of various communication projects, performing tasks related to planning, creating, maintaining photography and media communication (e.g. ensuring media or organisation communication on social networks, creating photo, video and audio content, creating and developing internet media, designing and developing online projects and formats, analysing and monitoring various aspects of communication; creating intranet content for different organisations, providing photography and multimedia communication for art, sports, festival and other projects, and other photography and multimedia communication related tasks).

The placement objectives are designed in accordance with the intended outcomes of the study programme. Students need to know how photography can be used and is used in advertising, art, journalism, research, public relations, the entertainment industry, the Internet. Understanding the use of photography in business is achieved during the placement as students learn the work of a photographic media expert in a company.

RSU supports its students according to the specific features of their placement place and assigned tasks within the frame of their study placement:

- RSU Faculty of Communication has established stable cooperation with many media operators, communication enterprises and enterprises of various profiles that require multimodal communication,
- RSU provides placement supervisor in charge of the selection of the placement place, conformity of the placement objectives to the study content. The supervisor assesses the performance of the student during the placement.
- RSU provides legal assistance in concluding a trilateral cooperation agreement that defines students' rights and duties during the placement

The joint project of LSM and RSU might be viewed as an example of good practice. Within the frame of the project, in the academic year 2019/2020, students of the programme Multimedia Communication jointly produce shows "Cita domnīca" on the channel pieci.lv (<https://www.pieci.lv/lv/lr5/raidijumi/cita-domnica/>). In this particular case, within the frame of the

study placement, students jointly produce shows for youngsters as a target audience supervised by the employees of LSM.

2.5. Analysis and assessment of the topics of the final theses of the students, their relevance in the respective field, including the labour market, and the evaluations of the final theses.

During the studies, students write and defend their Bachelor's thesis (see Annex 22). The topic of the Bachelor's thesis can be planned both as an empirical study and as a creative project in photography. Criteria for creative Bachelor's theses also include a high-level theoretical part, but instead of an empirical study, students develop a project in photography (commercial photography, author photography, or photojournalism). For the time being, it is not possible to draw conclusions about the trends of the Bachelor's theses defended, as the number of students and graduates is not large enough to produce meaningful statistics, but the main thematic directions that outline the work of the graduates are:

- Multimedia projects, such as Bachelor's thesis "Seniors' Stories in a Multimedia Project" (2017), Bachelor's thesis "'Multimedia Project on the Street Food Trade in New York" (2017), Bachelor's thesis "Portrait Interviews with Latvian Fashion Designers. Creative Work" (2017);
- Short films, such as Bachelor's thesis "Development of Music Video for the Song "Pelēkos Rītos" of the Band "Audiokvartāls"" (2017), Bachelor's thesis "Development of Documentary Short Film – the First Latvians at the Cycling Competition in Africa" (2018);
- Film content analysis, such as Bachelor's thesis "Traits of Auteur Cinema in the Films by American Director Martin Scorsese" (2017), "Stylistic Traits of the Films by Christopher Nolan" by Renāte Andrejeva (2017), Bachelor's thesis "The Elements of Authorship and Modernism in the Films by Rolands Kalniņš" (2017);
- Media content analysis, such as Bachelor's thesis "The Reflection of Death on tvnet.lv within the Context of Historical Discourse and Media Theory" (2017), "Videos on youtube.com Fostering the Development of Reading Skills in Children of Preschool Age: Analysis of Content and the Means of Expression" (2017).

The majority of final papers (90%) have been graded over 8 (very good). Such an assessment is associated with several factors. Before the submission of the final copy of the Bachelor's thesis students are obliged to consult their supervisor and submit an almost finalised version of the paper for pre-defence that takes place within the frame of the student conference. It ensures meeting high-quality standards. Unfortunately, in several cases, this results in students' drop-out or postponing the defence of the final paper to another year. The submitted Bachelor's theses have always been reviewed and electronically checked for plagiarism. If the supervisor of the Bachelor's thesis refuse to sign the submitted thesis (the student has failed to cooperate with the supervisor and has not observed the criteria for thesis development), two reviewers have been assigned for the paper by thus ensuring a more in-depth review.

Table on compliance of the study programme with the State Education Standard in Annex 17.1.

Mapping of the study courses for the achievement of learning outcomes of the study programme in Annex 18.1.

Curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme) in Annex 19.

Descriptions of the study courses of the study programme in Annex 20.

2.6. Analysis and assessment of the outcomes of the surveys conducted among the students, graduates, and employers, and the use of these outcomes for the improvement of the content and quality of studies by providing the respective examples.

Student survey at the end of the study course is organised in accordance with the procedure defined by RSU:

- for each study course in the e-studies, students complete a study course evaluation questionnaire, where they can express their opinion and proposals both regarding the content of the study course and its implementation methods, competences and work style of lecturers;
- upon completion of studies, they evaluate the study programme in general by completing a survey regarding the study programme;
- views of RSU alumni are identified and implemented primarily by the heads of the study programmes. In 2017, in order to improve the obtaining of graduate feedback, RSU Alumni Association in cooperation with RSU Department of Studies and RSU Centre for Educational Growth developed a unified questionnaire for graduates, which was published on [lv](#) in autumn 2019.

Once a year, the results of the study course survey and study programme survey are analysed. Results are reviewed at the meeting of departments, faculty councils, Study Quality Councils and Dean's Council, and as an aggregate are reflected in the mentioned annual report. Therefore, study courses are updated each year in accordance with the evaluation given by the students. Student representatives are also involved in faculty councils ensuring representation of their opinion in decision-making processes.

Student surveys are conducted after each study course, evaluating the course content, organisation and lecturer's work. In general, the course evaluations are very good. However, there are study courses that have not been evaluated enough for the data to be considered as reliable. Discussions with students in person about the involvement of students in the evaluation of study courses reveal a tendency that the study courses, the content and form of implementation of which are more satisfactory to the students, are less evaluated. If there are any organisational and content shortcomings in the study course, such study courses are more actively evaluated. For example, students of the programme of academic year 2017/2018 highlighted a number of organisational shortcomings in the study courses "History of Ideas of Photography" and "Student Media". Since the organisational problems could not be solved quickly enough, the lecturers of both study courses were replaced. Now, student satisfaction with the quality of the aforementioned study courses is much higher.

According to the survey results, students of the Bachelor's study programme are generally satisfied with the quality of studies. Survey data has also influenced the overall development of the study programme, as students have regularly expressed their desire for more practical tasks, which has led to including a guest lecture in almost every study course with an expert from the business world or a company visit, for example, visiting photo studios, museums, galleries, exhibition design service providers, communication agencies.

The employer survey is implemented by including specific questions to the employer in the placement report (placement supervisor's reference, see the Placement Regulations attached), which must be filled in and submitted to the placement supervisor at the Department of Communication Studies after completing the placement. Employers are also personally invited to give their opinion on cooperation with students of the Department of Communication Studies to the study programme director. The following are summarised and analysed views of employers / placement providers about students on the basis of the questionnaire.

1. What kind of knowledge or skills do you think students lacked in their placement assignments? What should be the focus in the training process?

Most employers (95%) respond that the students are excellent at their duties and ready for real-life work situations, are capable of individual and group tasks in communication, photo production, image evaluation, project management and media content development. Employers also emphasise the ability of students to take responsibility and be ethically correct according to the criteria of the communication industry. In some cases (5%) it has been pointed out (these data refer to 2013-2014) that students lack practical skills to work with video and audio post-production software. Many courses now include study content that provides the necessary skills to work with sound, static and moving images in Adobe CC software, and in recent years there has been no employer indication that students are not proficient in Adobe CC software.

2. What would you recommend to improve / change in the student placement organisation?

In most cases (90%) employers do not consider that anything should be changed in the organisation of student placements, but there are sometimes some comments (5%) that student placements should be longer, as this would help students to integrate more closely in the process of their chosen profession. The volume of placement is currently 8 CP. The possibility of increasing the volume of placement is not being considered yet. It should be noted that the study course "Student Media" has been developed that provides a simulation-based learning process and provides an experience that is close to real media activity.

2.7. Provide the assessment of the options of the incoming and outgoing mobility of the students, the dynamics of the number of the used opportunities, and the recognition of the study courses acquired during the mobility.

RSU implements Erasmus+ programme mobility activity among the countries participating in the programme. In total, more than 150 bilateral cooperation agreements have been signed, providing mobility of students and staff in all cycles of studies: during Bachelor's, Master's, and doctoral studies. Partnering universities are selected on the basis of available information on equal study programmes and conditions of the training language. One of the main conditions is the alignment of the study courses during the student exchange programme in order to be able to recognise study sources and add them to the diploma supplement of the respective RSU study programme. Thus, a complete study process is ensured, supplemented by experience gained abroad.

To ensure quality education in multimedia communication, internationally-rooted examples of good practice have been used. Mobility opportunities are used to improve and develop academic environment, innovative methods for the acquisition of the study content, attract foreign visiting professors and foster the internationalisation of the learning environment. Up to 15 students per

year go on mobilities within the frame of ERASMUS exchange programme.

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme)

3.1. Assessment of the compliance of the resources and provision (study provision, scientific support (if applicable), informative provision (including libraries), material and technical provision, and financial provision) with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the learning outcomes to be achieved by providing the respective examples. Whilst carrying out the assessment, it is possible to refer to the information provided for in the criteria set forth in Part II, Chapter 3, sub-paragraphs 3.1 to 3.3.

See the description of the study direction for a general description of the resources and facilities, material and technical provision, and financial provision available for RSU study programmes.

Multimedia computer room

The workstations, specially adapted for visual post-processing, are provided in the multimedia computer room of the Department of Communication Studies, located at the RSU educational building at Kuldīgas Street 9A. Students use the multimedia computer room both for independent work and during the study courses.

Student media

In order to provide a simulation-based study process, student media “[Skaļāk](#)” has been created, which is a compulsory learning content and place of practice for all students of the study programme. The work conditions of students there are close to real media, including work in groups as well as individual assignments for research and creative projects for media.

Photo studio

The photo studio is established to carry out both study assignments and independent work. It is equipped with artificial lights and backgrounds, which allows taking professional photos and videos of people and objects.

Photo and video equipment

Over the last six years, there have been significant investments in photo and video equipment (EUR 60,000) to enable all students to produce professional photo and video stories if they do not have personal photo equipment. Sony donated EUR 10,000 in photo equipment after the study programme was licenced.

3.2. Assessment of the study provision and scientific support, including the resources provided within the cooperation with other science institutes and institutions of higher education (applicable to the doctoral study programmes).

Not applicable.

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (4. Teaching Staff)

4.1. Analysis and assessment of the changes to the composition of the teaching staff over the reporting period and their impact on the study quality.

There has been little change in the teaching staff since obtaining the study programme license. One lecturer, Klāvs Sedlenieks, has defended his dissertation and received his Ph.D. (Tallinn University, Estonia 2013).

Since the licensing of the study programme, the teaching staff regularly improves their qualification by participating in scientific and artistic projects, participating in conferences and publishing articles in academic journals. The composition of the teaching staff has not changed significantly, but a stronger link has been established with photography and media professionals.

Liaisons with photography professionals are highly valued and they are regularly invited to work with students as visiting lecturers, such as photographer Reinis Hofmanis, experimental film and analogue photography expert Ieva Balode, editor of "FK" magazine and commissioner of the Riga Photo Month Arnis Balčus, head of the Museum of Decorative Arts and Design Inese Baranovska, expert on new media and artist Rasa Šmite, professor Donald Weber of the Royal Academy of Art in the Hague.

4.2. Assessment of the compliance of the qualification of the teaching staff members (academic staff members, visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers, and visiting assistants) involved in the implementation of the study programme with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the provisions set out in the respective regulatory enactments. Provide information on how the qualification of the teaching staff members contributes to the achievement of the learning outcomes.

Pursuant to Article 55 of the Law on the Institutions of Higher Education, at least five professors and associate professors who have been elected for academic positions at RSU are involved in the implementation of the study programme:

- 1) Professor Anda Rožukalne;
- 2) Professor Sergejs Kruks;

- 3) Professor Deniss Hanovs;
- 4) Associate Professor Ilva Skulte;
- 5) Associate Professor Ritma Rungule;
- 6) Associate Professor Sandra Mihailova.

All faculty members who are involved as lecturers or visiting lecturers in the study programme shall have at least a Master's degree in a related discipline. A total of 33 lecturers participate in the implementation of the study programme.

See the list of academic staff publications for the reporting period in Annex 6.4.

4.3. Information on the number of the scientific publications of the academic staff members, involved in the implementation of the doctoral study programme, as published during the reporting period by listing the most significant publications published in Scopus or WoS CC indexed journals. As for the social sciences, humanitarian sciences, and the science of art, the scientific publications published in ERIH+ indexed journals may be additionally specified (if applicable).

Not applicable.

4.4. Information on the participation of the academic staff, involved in the implementation of the doctoral study programme, in scientific projects as project managers or prime contractors/ subproject managers/ leading researchers by specifying the name of the relevant project, as well as the source and the amount of the funding. Provide information on the reporting period (if applicable).

Not applicable.

4.5. Provide examples of the involvement of the academic staff in the scientific research and/or artistic creation activities both at national and at international level (in the fields related to the content of the study programme), as well as the use of the obtained information in the study process.

Several international projects have simultaneously been implemented at the Faculty of Communication. These projects involve scientific research and discoveries thereof enriches the content of the study course. Below are some of them:

2017 - 2020 Erasmus+ Strategic partnership project: "Media literacy and information literacy. Laboratory of innovative teaching methods", partners: University of Tartu; Vilniaus Universitetas; Uniwersytet Wroclawsky; Göteborgs universitet; National News Agency LETA SIA, National Library of Latvia (project participants: Prof. Anda Rožukalne, Assist. Prof. Alnis Stakle,

Assoc. Prof. Ilva Skulte).

<https://www.rsu.lv/projekts/mediju-un-informacijas-pratiba-inovativo-apmacibas-metozu-laboratorija>

The main objectives of the project are the following: the establishment of international and interdisciplinary centre for knowledge exchange, capacity building and competence development, as well as the data base of theoretical and methodological resources in the field of media and information literacy based on the results obtained during practical studies, creative experiments and project development (laboratory concept), identification of the main directions for the development of media and information literacy, structure and form of media and information literacy in society by establishing a study programme based on the obtained knowledge and current ever-changing environment of media and information.

Study courses which include scientific findings gained during the project: Media Audiences, Photography as Communication, Creative Photography, Advertising Photography, Visual Anthropology, Media Critics and Analysis, Cultural Journalism, History of Communication, Introduction to Communication Theories, Mass Communication Theories.

2017 – 2018: Project of the EU Asylum and Migration Fund The development of a responsible, multiform and qualitative journalism in the national and regional mass media of Latvia, facilitating integration of third country nationals in Latvia (No. PMIF/7/2016/1/03) has been implemented in cooperation with the Baltic Centre for Media Excellence (project participants Prof. Anda Rožukalne, Assist. Prof. Alnis Stakle, Assoc. Prof. Ilva Skulte, Prof. Sergejs Kruks, Assist. Prof. Agita Lūse).

<https://www.rsu.lv/projekts/atbildigas-daudzveidigas-un-kvalitativas-zurnalistikas-attistiba-latvijas-nacionalajos-un>

Project results and findings are integrated in the study content in several ways. First, lectures and seminars held within the frame of the project are open for students and incorporated in the curriculum as compulsory events. Second, lecturers involved in the project incorporate scientific findings on the reflection of migration in the media environment in Latvia, editorial strategies and visual communication into their study courses and agenda. Study courses that contain scientific findings of the project: Semiotics, Media Audiences, Photography as Communication, Visual Anthropology, Social Anthropology, Media Critics and Analysis, Mass Communication Theories.

2013 – 2016: “Overcoming the crisis in Latvia: economic, social and communication aspects” RSU ZP 15/2013, (project participants: Prof. Sergejs Kruks, Prof. Anda Rožukalne, Assoc. Prof. Ilva Skulte).

The project analysed the causes of the economic and financial crisis, coping strategies and impact of consequences on households, business activities, social solidarity and discursive practice in Latvia based on theoretical concepts.

<https://www.rsu.lv/projekts/krizes-parvaresana-latvija-ekonomiskie-socialie-un-komunikacijas-aspekti>

Project results and findings were incorporated in the study course Social Anthropology.

2011 – 2019: “The Index of Internet Aggressiveness”, supported by Friedrich Ebert Foundation, (project participants: Prof. Anda Rožukalne, Assoc. Prof. Ilva Skulte, Prof. Sergejs Kruks, Assist. Prof. Agita Lūse, Assist. Prof. Klāvs Sedlenieks). Project outcomes have significantly enriched the understanding of media and communication strategies and tactics of media audiences. Project results and findings were incorporated in the study courses Semiotics, Media Audiences, Photography as Communication, Social Anthropology, Media Critics and Analysis, Mass Communication Strategies.

See the list of academic staff publications in Annex 6.4.

See Annex 24.7 for a confirmation that the academic staff of the study programme complies with the requirements set forth in the third paragraph of Article 55, Paragraph one of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

For more information, see Part II, Paragraph 4 of the study direction description.

4.6. Assessment of the cooperation between the teaching staff members by specifying the mechanisms used to promote the cooperation and ensure the interrelation between the study courses/ modules. Specify also the proportion of the number of the students and the teaching staff within the study programme (at the moment of the submission of the Self-Assessment Report).

RSU ensures regular observation of the work of the teaching staff and the visiting lecturers. The lecturers attend one another's lectures and practical classes, evaluating colleague's class and making recommendations for improving the work of the respective member of academic staff. The results of the student survey are also regularly assessed, taking into account recommendations, suggestions and comments. Taking into account the results of the student survey, adjustments were made to the content of study courses and teaching methods. The observation results and current issues regarding the content of the study courses and the interconnection of the content are regularly discussed at the meetings of RSU Department of Communication Studies, which take place every month, except the summer months.

The entire academic staff is regularly informed about the changes in the study programme planning, new study courses and new visiting lecturers, which allows to coordinate the content of study courses in time and ensure the sustainability of the programme.

For more information, see Part II, Paragraph 3.4–3.6 of the study direction description.

After calculating the total number of lecturers specified in the accreditation documents of the ABSP "Multimedia Communication", it may be concluded that a total 33 lecturers are involved in the implementation of the programme, while the total number of students as of 3 October 2019 was 194. Thus, student and lecturer ratio is 5.88.

The number of lecturers of the study programme is similar to that of other Bachelor's study programmes at the Faculty of Communication. Lecturers cooperate in planning the content of their study courses and encouraging students to develop joint interdisciplinary research and creative projects that exceed the limits of a single study course. Study course Student Medium might be singled out as an example of good practice. Within the frame of the course students produce and publish popular science articles, research and creative projects, shoot short films, develop portrait interviews and conduct journalistic educational research. <https://skalak.rsu.lv/> It must be noted that none of the publications of the student medium can be developed within the frame of a single study course. Student medium is both a space for cooperation and a creative laboratory within the frame of which a majority of lecturers and students cooperate.

Annexes

III. Description of the Study Programme - 1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme		
Compliance of the joint study programme with the provisions of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (table)		
Statistics on the students over the reporting period	16_pielik_MK_MKN_Statistika_eng.pdf	16_pielik_MK_MKN_Statistika_lv.pdf
III. Description of the Study Programme - 2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof		
Compliance of the study programme with the State Education Standard	17.1_pielik_Attilst_Izgl_Stand_eng.pdf	17.1_pielik_Attilst_Izgl_Stand_lv.pdf
Compliance of the qualification to be acquired upon completion of the study programme with the professional standard (if applicable)		
Compliance of the study programme with the specific regulatory framework applicable to the relevant field (if applicable)		
Mapping of the study courses/ modules for the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study programme	18.1_pielik_StK_St-rezult_kartejums_MK_lv_gatavs_eng.pdf	18.1_pielik_StK_StR_kartejums_lv.pdf
Curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme)	19_pielik_MK_planojums_PL-NL_eng.pdf	19_pielik_MK_planojums_PL-NL_LV.pdf
Descriptions of the study courses/ modules	20-1_pielik_Studiju_kursu_apraksti_MK_ENG.pdf	20-1_pielik_Studiju_kursu_apraksti_MK_LV.pdf
Description of the Study Direction - Other mandatory attachments		
Sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme.	24-1_ABSP_MK_diploms_gatavs_ENG.pdf	24-1_ABSP_MK_diploms_gatavs.pdf
Description of the Study Programme - Other mandatory attachments		
Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college will provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme or at another higher education institution/ college (a contract with another accredited higher education institution/ college), in case the implementation of the study programme is discontinued	24.2_pielikums_Apliecinajums_par_citu_StP_IKZ_parakstits_tulk.pdf	24.2_pielikums_Apliecinajums_par_citu_StP_IKZ_parakstits.pdf
Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college guarantees to the students a compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the higher education institution/ college (actions or failure to act) and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme	24.3_pielikums_Apliecinajums_par_zaudejumiem_IKZ_parakstits_eng.pdf	24.3_pielikums_Apliecinajums_par_zaudejumiem_IKZ_parakstits.pdf
Confirmation of the higher education institution/ college that the teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language according to European language levels (see the levels under www.europass.lv), if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language.	24.5_pielik_Apliecin_anglu_val_StV_IKZ_parakstits_eng.pdf	24.5_pielik_Apliecin_anglu_val_StV_IKZ_parakstits.pdf
If the study programmes in the study direction subject to the assessment are doctoral study programmes, a confirmation that at least five teaching staff members with doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field or sub-field of science, in which the study programme has intended to award a scientific degree.		
If academic study programmes are implemented within the study direction, a document confirming that the academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the provisions set out in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause three of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education	24-7_pielik_apliecinajums_ABSP_MK_eng.pdf	24-7_pielik_apliecinajums_ABSP_MK.pdf
Sample (or samples) of the study agreement	24.8_pielik_Studiju_lig_eng.pdf	24.8_pielik_Studiju_lig_lv.pdf
If academic study programmes for less than 250 full-time students are implemented within the study direction, the opinion of the Council for Higher Education shall be attached in compliance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.	24.9_pielik_AIP_atzinums_MK_eng.pdf	24.9_pielik_AIP_atzinums_lv.pdf

Communication and Media Studies

Title of the higher education institution	<i>Information and Communication Sciences</i>
ProcedureStudyProgram.Name	<i>Communication and Media Studies</i>
Education classification code	<i>45321</i>
Type of the study programme	<i>Academic master study programme</i>
Name of the study programme director	<i>Ilva</i>
Surname of the study programme director	<i>Skulte</i>
E-mail of the study programme director	<i>ilva.skulte@rsu.lv</i>
Title of the study programme director	<i>Dr. philol.</i>
Phone of the study programme director	
Goal of the study programme	<i>The strategic aim of the academic Master's study programme "Communication and Media Studies" is to ensure an in-depth acquisition of theoretical knowledge in the information and communication science, at the same time developing the mastering of work and research methods and skills for using them in the analysis and research of communication problems and media environment. The main aim of the study programme is to prepare communication and media specialists compliant with the international communication science standards who would be ready for independent academic and scientific research and practical activities in the field. This aim is achieved by ensuring the acquisition of communication and media theory, specialisation direction related to communication problems (Media Economics and Management, Visual Communication, Marketing, New Media, etc.) and research paper methods and abilities, as well as by supervising and consulting the development of Master's thesis.</i>

Tasks of the study programme	<p><i>1. To prepare academically educated social science specialists who are able to independently use the acquired theoretical knowledge and research methods for solving specific problems.</i></p> <p><i>2. To promote the competitiveness of specialists in the local and European labour market and to ensure that this competitiveness is based on good theoretical knowledge and a high level of skills and competences in communication analysis, the field of media, public relations, and in marketing;</i></p> <p><i>3. To implement the acquisition of modern knowledge in communication theories and social research methods by paying attention to new theoretical approaches, research of topical communication problems and solutions in European countries and in Latvia.</i></p> <p><i>4. To prepare highly-qualified, academically educated (multi)media specialists who are innovative method-oriented and who follow the field developments in Latvia and abroad;</i></p> <p><i>5. To promote interest in topical social problems and their solution in Latvia's society and in Europe by involving researchers from Latvia and abroad in the implementation of the programme, as well as by involving students in the conducted research by the teaching staff of the department.</i></p> <p><i>6. To develop creative and critical thinking, the skill to express a reasoned opinion and to substantiate it, thus enriching discussion on communication problems in different fields.</i></p> <p><i>7. To develop independence and entrepreneurship and the ability to manage that is based on knowledge and competences.</i></p>
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Results of the study programme	<p>1. Is able to demonstrate in-depth and extended knowledge and understanding of a wide spectrum of communication matters in compliance with the latest findings, particularly in the context of public mediatisation, informatisation, and globalisation.</p> <p>2. Is able to use the theories and methods tested in communication science by conducting research in different fields of communication.</p> <p>3. Is able to analyse, reasonably discuss and to explain complex communication problems;</p> <p>4. Is able to specialise and creatively work in the selected field of specialisation (journalism, public relations, integrated marketing communication, social media and network communication, multimedia);</p> <p>5. Is able to take up management in a respective field by developing strategies, finding tactical solutions and further developing one's competences.</p> <p>6. Is able to develop an analysis, research and management model for each professional field of communication by integrating knowledge from different fields, analysing factual and problem causes, projecting development and reacting to changing environmental conditions of communication;</p> <p>7. Is able to develop, plan, and conduct innovations in business models and work organisation processes in the field of communication, public relations, and journalism with an aim to create a sustainable business.</p> <p>8. Is able to identify in practice, independently formulate and critically analyse problems of different sub-disciplines in the field of communication and media problems in their specificity by justifying and substantiating the decisions taken.</p>
Final examination upon the completion of the study programme	Master's thesis

Study programme forms

Full time studies - 2 years - latvian

Study type and form	Full time studies
Duration in full years	2
Duration in month	0
Language	latvian
Amount (CP)	80
Admission requirements (in English)	Previous acquired education: higher education - Bachelor's degree or Level 5 professional qualification in a state-accredited study programme in social sciences and humanities
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	Master of Social Sciences in Information and Communication Science
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
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Rīga Stradiņš University	RĪGA	DZIRCIEMA IELA 16, KURZEMES RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1007
Liepāja branch of Rīga Stradiņš University	LIEPĀJA	RIŅĶU IELA 24/26, LIEPĀJA, LV-3405

Part time studies - 2 years, 6 months - latvian

Study type and form	<i>Part time studies</i>
Duration in full years	2
Duration in month	6
Language	<i>latvian</i>
Amount (CP)	80
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Previous acquired education: higher education - Bachelor's degree or Level 5 professional qualification in a state-accredited study programme in social sciences and humanities.</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Master of Social Sciences in Information and Communication Science</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Rīga Stradiņš University	RĪGA	DZIRCIEMA IELA 16, KURZEMES RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1007
Liepāja branch of Rīga Stradiņš University	LIEPĀJA	RIŅĶU IELA 24/26, LIEPĀJA, LV-3405

Part time studies - 2 years, 6 months - english

Study type and form	<i>Part time studies</i>
Duration in full years	2
Duration in month	6
Language	<i>english</i>
Amount (CP)	80
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Previous acquired education: higher education - Bachelor's degree or Level 5 professional qualification in a state-accredited study programme in social sciences and humanities.</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Master of Social Sciences in Information and Communication Science</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Rīga Stradiņš University	RĪGA	DZIRCIEMA IELA 16, KURZEMES RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1007
Liepāja branch of Rīga Stradiņš University	LIEPĀJA	RIŅĶU IELA 24/26, LIEPĀJA, LV-3405

Full time studies - 2 years - english

Study type and form	<i>Full time studies</i>
Duration in full years	2
Duration in month	0
Language	<i>english</i>

Amount (CP)	80
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Previous acquired education: higher education – Bachelor's degree or Level 5 professional qualification in a state-accredited study programme in social sciences and humanities</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>Master of Social Sciences in Information and Communication Science</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Rīga Stradiņš University	RĪGA	DZIRCIEMA IELA 16, KURZEMES RAJONS, RĪGA, LV-1007
Liepāja branch of Rīga Stradiņš University	LIEPĀJA	RIŅĶU IELA 24/26, LIEPĀJA, LV-3405

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme)

1.1. Description and analysis of changes in study programme parameters that have taken place since the issue of the previous accreditation certificate of study direction or the license of study programme if study programme is not included in the accreditation page of the study direction

Nr.	Parameter	Analysis of changes
1.	Study direction	—
2.	Name of the study programme	—
3.	Code of the study programme in accordance with the Latvian Education Classification	—
4.	Director of the study programme	—
5.	Scientific degree of the head of the study programme	—
6.	Aim of the study programme	Basically, the aims of the study programme have not changed, however, using current European and Latvian education policy documents, as well as based on the results of employer and graduate surveys, a more specific focus has been provided to more precise wording of the aims and better coordination between the learning outcomes of the study programme and the learning outcomes of the study courses.

Nr.	Parameter	Analysis of changes
7.	Objectives of the study programme	The objectives of the study programme have been developed and supplemented in accordance with the objectives of the study programme, which in turn were readjusted in compliance with the EU and Latvian education policy and corresponding to the results of student, graduate and employer surveys. The objectives are mainly supplemented so that they reveal openness to innovation (Objective 4) and ability to manage development (Objective 7).
8.	Learning outcomes to be achieved	The learning outcomes have been supplemented and corrected in the context of EQF recommendations and mapping of the learning outcomes of the study courses, which has enabled the programme management to better review the interaction between the competence, knowledge and skills to be acquired in individual study courses and their relevance to the aims and objectives of the study programme.
9.	Final examination upon the completion of the study programme	—
10.	Form and type of the study programme	—
11.	Duration of the study programme	—
12.	Language in which the study programme is implemented	During the course of accreditation, it is intended to include English as an implementation language, although there are currently no specific plans to start offering studies in English. According to the plan for the development of the study direction (see Annex 4.1) it is planned to set up a working group to evaluate the extension of the possibilities for the implementation of study programmes.
13.	Amount of the study programme (CP, preferably also ECTS)	—

Nr.	Parameter	Analysis of changes
14.	Admission requirements	—
15.	The degree, to be awarded	
16.	The professional qualification to be awarded	—
17.	Place of implementation	So far, the study programme has only been implemented in Riga, but in accordance with the plan for the development of the study direction (see Annex 4.1) it is planned to establish a working group to evaluate the possibilities for implementation of study programmes and to model their implementation plan at RSU Liepaja branch. The material and technical facilities of the branch and RSU as a whole are adequate for its implementation.

1.2. Analysis and assessment of the statistical data on the students of the respective study programme, the dynamics of the number of the students, and the factors affecting the changes to the number of the students. The analysis shall be broken down in the different study forms, types, and languages.

The Master's study programme "Communication and Media Studies" is implemented as a full-time regular studies programme. Data from surveys on the students suggest that the majority of students combine studies with work in enterprises of the specific field where they often hold key positions – it is specifically work in positions at responsible enterprises in communication and media fields which make the future study programme students look for additional education, competence improvement, and in-depth understanding opportunities. Opportunities offered by the content of the study programme are highly evaluated by the students; moreover, the scheduled model for study work offered by the Master's study programmes at the RSU FC has been created thoughtfully in order to comply with the students' needs and to ensure full-time study possibilities without ceasing professional activity. Practical experience at work enriches the study process content-wise by offering students examples from everyday work life in joint meetings, analyses, and discussions, which is an important part of programme's pedagogical philosophy (see teaching methods). At the same time, this factor has a negative impact on the dynamics of the number of students, since the inability to combine studies with work in terms of time and intensity is one of the major reasons for interrupting studies. There are two stages where studies are terminated by most of the students: during the first months after beginning their studies each year several students leave, since they

have not sufficiently considered their interests and opportunities, and after the first study year when students leave voluntarily or are expelled due to academic failure.

Overall, each year around 10–15 students enrol in the study programme. In some years, the number of enrolled students reached around 20 students (for example, in 2014). It is a considerably better result than during the financial and economic crisis and post-crisis period (2009–2012); however, the admission results are evaluated as an unstable indicator mainly owing to the fact that many become students of the study programme without completely assessing their opportunities and soon abandon studies. The management of the study programme works towards popularising the study programme by both organising [public readings with the participation of programme's graduates](#) and [telling about it on the media](#).

Overall, fluctuations in the number of students are one of the biggest threats for the development of the study programme; therefore, management of the study programme constantly pays attention to recruitment of students, determining of work conditions of studies and other contextual factors with an aim to improve studies so that they would comply with the needs of the potential students entering the higher education market for selecting a Master's study programme.

Annex 16 contains statistical data on students in the reporting period.

The study programme is accredited for full-time studies (see Annex 16 Student Statistics within the Reporting Period), but at the time of accreditation it is also submitted for part-time implementation. According to the Study Direction development plan until 2023, considering the dynamics of the number of students and the results of market research, the availability of resources, workload of lecturers, profitability, etc., the Faculty of Communication will consider the possibility to start also part-time implementation of the study programme. At the time of accreditation, the study programme is also submitted for implementation in English, however, the management of the study programme does not have any specific plans for the next two years.

Information on the planning of possible part-time studies is available in Annex 19.

1.3. Analysis and assessment of the interrelation between the name of the study programme, the degree or professional qualification to be acquired or the degree and professional qualification to be acquired, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and the admission requirements.

After successfully mastering the academic Master's study programme "Communication and Media Studies", students are awarded a Master's degree of social sciences in communication and information sciences. It means that the students also have to acquire social science, particularly communication and information science, theoretical models and approaches, social and communication research methodology and latest developments in order to receive in-depth knowledge and to be able to continue academic and commercial research after completing the Master's study programme, they need to have a grasp of different communication sub-fields, traditional and new media communication and cultural peculiarities in the global world, and also after completing their studies they need to be able to actively, innovatively, and creatively participate in social life and in the field of the labour market which undergoes intensive development and constant changes. In this context, in accordance with **the strategic aim** of the academic Master's study programme "Communication and Media Studies" which is to ensure an in-depth acquisition of theoretical knowledge in the information and communication science, at the

same time developing the mastering of work and research methods and skills for using them in the analysis and research of communication problems and media environment and with **the main aim** to prepare communication and media specialists compliant with the international communication science standards who would be ready for independent academic and scientific research and practical activities in the field, specific learning outcomes are considered for the acquisition of which each course, content, as well as teaching method segment, has its place.

Programme's history shows that the programme has been improved so that its learning outcomes to be achieved would be more compliant with the challenges of the degree to be acquired and of the professional field, as well as with the projected needs of the labour market in Latvia, the EU, and in the world. With this aim in mind, already as of academic year 2010/2011 the name of the study programme was made more precise by changing it from "Communication" to "Communication and Media Studies" in order to focus more on the specificity of communication media and on peculiarities of multimedia communication in the modern globalised world. This course was later also kept track of in terms of the choice of study courses, content to be acquired as part of study courses and the topicality of students' independent research. Special attention is paid to the balance between study content whose objective is to ensure an in-depth and extended understanding (theories, models and their application in communication and media criticism, in analysis and research (study results KMM 1, KMM-6, see Annex 18.1)) and the ability to conduct independent objective studies and analysis (KMM-2, KMM-3) and study content where the main accent is placed on peculiarities and functions of specific professional communication fields, as well as on the specificity and opportunities of different media to work independently, sustainably, and creatively, including in the management (KMM-4, KMM-5) and to be able to analyse, project, and to innovate (KMM-7, KMM-8). In order to guarantee the study outcomes and to achieve the set out aims, the admission conditions lay down that applicants who have obtained a Bachelor's degree in social sciences or humanities or a second level professional higher education diploma in a state-accredited study programme after successfully taking an entrance test can be enrolled in the Master's study programme "Communication and Media Studies" for full-time studies. Foreign applicants need to have an equivalent education to Latvia's Bachelor's degree which is decided upon by a body of experts at the Academic Information Centre.

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof)

2.1. Assessment of the relevance of the content of the study course/ module and the compliance with the needs of the relevant industry and labour market and with the trends in science. Provide information on how and whether the content of the study course/ module is updated in line with the development trends of the relevant industry, labour market, and science. In case of master's and doctoral study programmes, specify and provide the justification as to whether the degrees are awarded in view of the developments and findings in the field of science or artistic creation.

The Master's study programme is designed for full-time students and it is implemented in four semesters (two academic years) whose total volume is 80 CP (120 ECTS).

During the first three semesters, 10 compulsory part study courses (A group, 28 CP; 42 ECTS) and

12 restricted elective part study courses (B group, 26 CP, 39 ECTS), as well as three free elective study courses (C group, 6 CP, 9 ECTS) are implemented in the programme. The final semester is fully allocated for the drafting and defence of the Master's thesis (20 CP, 30 ECTS).

Overall, the study programme offers 20 elective study courses; thus, depending on the students' choice with regard to the study courses of the parts B and C, their implementation may differ across study years. In the final – fourth – semester, students work on their Master's theses which includes studying the theoretical material, evaluation, selection, and conducting empirical research.

As already emphasised, in order to ensure the achievement of the programme's aims, the fulfilment of objectives and to ensure the designed learning outcomes, the content of the Master's study programme "Communication and Media Studies" consists of the study courses in social and information and communication theories, social research methodology, as well as study courses which allow specialising in certain topical communication directions, aspects, sub-fields, and of the Master's thesis.

Successful completion of studies requires completing all theoretical, methodological, and specialisation study courses, selecting among the offered specialisation directions (B and C level courses), preparing research papers and essays, successfully passing examinations, obtaining 60 CP (90 ECTS), drafting and defence of the Master's thesis (20 CP, 30 ECTS). See Table 1 on the overview of the programme's content according to course content.

Table 1. Structure of the study programme according to the content of study courses

Course content	Name of the course (category, number of CP)
I. THEORIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of Micro and Macro Theories of Communication (A, 4) • Theoretical Models of Communication (A, 4) • Media Theories (A, 2) • Theories of New Media and Internet (A, 2) • Social Theories (A, 4) • Social, Political, and Cultural Processes of Global Communication (A, 4) • Ethics in Communication and Public Relations: Concepts and Ongoing Challenges (A, 2) • Communication Psychology and Pedagogics (A, 2) • International Relations and Intercultural Communication (B, 2) • Mass Communication and Sociology of Culture (B, 2) • Social Anthropology (B, 2) • Information Society: Values and Processes (B, 2) • Culture Theory (B, 2)
II. METHODS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of Communication Situations (A, 4) • Master's Thesis Drafting. Proseminar (A, 2) • Research in Social Sciences: Qualitative and Quantitative Methods (B, 2) • Discourse Analysis (C, 2)

III. DIRECTIONS

- Public Relations Management Models (B, 2)
- Advertising in Mass Communication Processes (B, 2)
- Public Relations in an Integrated Marketing Communication System: Campaign Management, Political Campaigns and Marketing (B, 2)
- Psycholinguistics (B, 2)
- Communication of Persuasion (B, 2)
- Media Economy and Management (B, 4)
- Communication Policy in the European Union (B, 2)
- Journalism: Modern Processes and Challenges (B, 2)
- Brand Management: Theory and Practice (B, 2)
- Civil Defence and Environmental Protection (B, 2)
- Consciousness, Behaviour and Communication (B, 2)
- History of Culture and Communication in Latvia (B, 2)
- Media, Music and Society (C, 2)
- Cultural Policy (C, 2)
- Subcultural Communication (C, 2)
- Information Rights and Copyright (C, 2)
- Human Security (C, 2)
- Photography (C, 2)
- Language of Cinema (C, 2)
- Radio Communication (C, 2)
- Social Media and Crisis Communication (C, 2)

It has been previously mentioned that the Master's study programme has been created so that it would be possible to implement a full higher education study cycle at the Department of Communication Studies of the RSU Faculty of Communication by arranging the study programmes in accordance with the Bologna Process trends. Whereas the content of the study programme is formed in the manner of Lisbon Strategies. In-depth understanding of communication, skills to work, innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship, as well as communication analysis abilities – direct learning outcome – are treated as an important component when working in any field of a modern knowledge society, since the skill to react to changes and solve problems is specifically based on communication. In order to bring the study programme closer to the actual situation beyond the walls of the university, many study courses are based on situation analysis studies and similar research projects are conducted solely by students as a part of each study course – special importance is ascribed specifically to independent research activity. Many study courses of the study programme stimulate students to think, reason, and create their research projects with an interdisciplinary orientation. Owing to the cooperation between RSU structural units, this principle has already been proved to be practically implementable and it is intended to be expanded in future as well.

Communication, public relation, and media industry employees, who help to maintain a link with society, are often invited to be part of the audience. Students select topics for their Master's theses by directly reacting to the open social, political, and entrepreneurial environment requirements.

By implementing the principle of lifelong learning, the study programme is open to recent graduates of Bachelor's study programmes, as well as to holders of a Master's degree with longer practical work experience. Surveys indicate that mostly for students this experience is related to media or public relations work or to communication research and analysis as well. Work experience in the field of communication is considered to be a valuable material in discussions and exchange of opinions which are important components of studies. The management of the study programme

tries to support the working students and students with children by taking into account their needs when planning the class timetable.

Since 2012, the content of the study programme has been gradually developed by following the developments in the field, labour market, as well as in communication science. Innovation and changes relate to content changes in the study courses by heads of the study courses constantly updating the content and sources of literature. For example, at the beginning, the study course “Analysis of Communication Situations” is created as a flexible module where each year new topicalities are offered to the students’ attention and for analytical practice purposes by involving visiting lecturers such as employers (for example, radio “pieci.lv” director K. Dagilis after the foundation of this radio station) and policymakers (K. Ločmele from the Media Policy Division of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia), as well as by paying attention to research; for example, by inviting students to be involved in work at the department with the Saeima debate corpus analysis tool and to be involved in upcoming research. There are similar occurrences in other study courses (“Public Relations Management Models”, “Brand Management: Theory and Practice”, “Media Economy and Management”, “Social, Political, and Cultural Processes of Global Communication”, “Journalism: Modern Processes and Challenges”, etc.) where the content of study courses is updated in accordance with field and research trends on the basis of the analysis of theoretical literature and by close cooperation with researchers and practitioners of a particular field. In the experience of updating the content of study courses, a special method is to be regarded in the context of study programme internationalisation. Foreign lecturers are sought for and invited in a targeted manner for study course teaching purposes in order to offer a different approach, introducing exchange of experience in the study process but at the same time preventing the content of study programmes from “stagnating”. A special example is the study course “Journalism: Modern Processes and Challenges” whose teaching in the last six years has been implemented only by foreign professors – Prof. Tyrone Shaw from the Vermont University, USA, Assistant Professor Maarit Jaakkola from Tampere University, Finland and Prof. Sigrún Stefánsdóttir from the University of Akureyri, Iceland, as well as study course “Media Economy and Management” where guest lectures are traditionally read by foreign lecturers Päivi Maijanen-Kyläheiko from Lappeenranta-Lahti University of Technology, Finland, Prof. Deimantas Jastramskis from Vilnius University, and experienced media editor and director of a publishing house Inga Gorbunova, as well as Ingus Bērziņš, editor-in-chief of news portal “delfi.lv” and other leading field specialists. The content of study courses, analysing topical examples and specifying the focus of the content, has been changed in a targeted way in those study courses that relate to media policy (“Cultural Policy”, “Communication Policy in the European Union”), but the set of methods to be acquired has been improved in order to support independent research done by students whose topicality is carefully being monitored.

Likewise, the course structure in compulsory and free elective levels has been improved. Primarily, the section of C study courses has been developed by reacting to development of multimedia communication and the needs for understanding the specificity of different media for Master’s level specialists (courses “Film Language”, “Radio Communication”, “Social Media and Crisis Communication”, etc.). In order to provide graduates with an understanding of risks and readiness to react to critical modern environment situations, the study course “Civil Defence and Environmental Protection” has been introduced.

The introduced changes comply with the Cabinet Regulations and with findings of researchers on the development of communication and media, and on trends in the labour market. Analyses and forecasts of the labour market development indicate that despite the popularity of social science study programmes and potential overproduction of persons having such education, graduates of Master’s study programme “Communication and Media Studies” have their stable niche in the

future labour market of Latvia and Europe. Firstly, employees with a higher level of education are foreseen to have better prospects. Secondly, with the increase of technological means of communication in different spheres of life and work life; for example, in public administration and system management, service, education, culture, and in other spheres the demand for workers with communication and (digital) media skills, knowledge and overall understanding of digital communication and specificity of media communication will increase. Thirdly, development of the communication field is parallel to the development of economy, it can largely be correlated with economic development (advertisement, public relations, integrated marketing communication, social media) and it ensures transparency, stabilisation, and order of different social fields (journalism); therefore, development can even here be indirectly projected both in the context of staff change and necessary new skills. Research conducted by UL researchers *Dr. oec. Prof. E. Kasalis, Dr. oec. Assoc. Prof. E. Brēķis, Dr. oec. Assoc. Prof. S. Jēkabsone, Dr. oec. Assistant Prof. and K. Purmalis* in the field of labour market, for example, indicate that employees with new skills in the field of communication and interaction will be needed, particularly in work with new technologies that to a greater extent complies with the profile of specialists prepared by the study programme. The necessity for new skills, knowledge, competences, and new labour force in the field of communication and media, as well as in the field of communication and advertisement, is not rejected by other, also the ones conducted by public institutions, conducted studies, for example, [SEA Overview on the Unemployment Situation in the Country](#) or [Informative Report on Medium and Long-term Labour Market Forecasts](#).

The content of the study programme fully complies with the “Regulations on the state academic standard of education”. Out of the 80 CP to be acquired, one quarter, which is 20 CP, is intended for successful development and defence of Master’s thesis, around 30 CP (this number may differ for each student on the level of B study courses) are received after mastering theory in the field of communication and the same number of CP is received for mastering of subjects related to testing of theoretical findings in the field and in the context of topical problems. Thereby, it ensures that in-depth theoretical knowledge and research skills, as well as communication analysis skills, would be acquired in the study programme “Communication and Media Studies”.

After evaluating the content of the study programme, it must be stated that it is created in accordance with regulatory enactments of the sectoral labour market and higher education, and with policy guidelines and latest developments. However, in relation to a relatively small number of students, study course subject-matter and selection options are not very diversified. The proportion of theoretical study courses is relatively small, since the strategy of the study programme provides that in the present situation it is more important to pay attention to an in-depth understanding of theoretical communication problems by preparing students also for the work of lecturing and further doctoral studies.

2.2. Assessment of the interrelation between the information included in the study courses/ modules, the intended learning outcomes, the set aims and other indicators, the relation between the aims of the study course/ module and the aims and intended outcomes of the study programme. In case of a doctoral study programme, provide a description of the main research roadmaps and the impact of the study programme on research and other education levels.

The management of the Master's study programme "Communication and Media Studies" is continuously working towards balancing the content of study courses in the context of aim achievement. Since for the purpose of the strategic aim of the study programme it is important to balance the readiness, depth and wideness of insight, sharpness of critically analytical vision of future Master's students with a practical view and readiness to creatively, enterprisingly, innovatively work in a diversified and ever-changing modern field of communication. Taking into account the latest development trends in the field of communication, it is important that in studies relatively considerable attention should be paid to four components:

- 1) formation of theoretical understanding;
- 2) development of research and analytical skills;
- 3) creation of competence in the specificity of different media and fields of communication and basic principles of functioning in each of them;
- 4) honing of independent, innovative, and sustainable entrepreneurial skills so that graduates of the study programme could become not only researchers, experts, and serious specialists in the field but also would independently and flexibly react to changes in the field by analysing and understanding trends and developing and not losing their qualification.

Based on the European Qualifications Framework, overall eight learning outcomes have been defined (see Point 1.1).

See Annex 18.1 on the mapping of study courses for the achievement of learning outcomes of the study programme.

For the purpose of creating theoretical understanding, the mastering of study courses should guarantee the first (KMM-1) and the sixth (KMM-6) learning outcome, respectively, students need to acquire the skill to demonstrate in-depth or increased knowledge and understanding which is based on the latest findings in the field – basis for creative and research activity and competence that would allow integrating knowledge from different fields by generating new knowledge, developing research methods as well; moreover, doing so in an ethical manner and acting responsibly with regard to consequences of one's actions. In order to ensure the acquisition of the mentioned knowledge and competences, the content of study courses is comprised of courses "Media Theories", "Theories of New Media and Internet", "Theoretical Models of Communication", as well as the study course "Social, Political, and Cultural Processes of Global Communication", "Mass Communication and Sociology of Culture", "History of Culture and Communication in Latvia", "Culture Theory", "Ethics in Communication and Public Relations: Concepts and Ongoing Challenges", "Integration of Micro and Macro Theories of Communication", and others. The last of these study courses guarantee the acquisition of competence – the ability to modulate problems, situations in process, and to forecast their development.

The second (KMM-2) and third (KMM-3) learning outcomes are intended for the development of research and analytical abilities, respectively, some study courses of the study programme – "Social Theories", "Master's Thesis Drafting. Proseminar", "Research in Social Sciences: Qualitative and Quantitative Methods", as well as free elective study course "Discourse Analysis" and the development and defence of Master's thesis itself – are expected to give students the necessary ability to independently use theory, communication research methods and problem solving skills in order to carry out research activity or highly-qualified professional functions, while others; for example, "Analysis of Communication Situations", "Social, Political, and Cultural Processes of Global Communication", "International Relations and Intercultural Communication", "Communication Policy in the European Union", "Information Society: Values and Processes", "Culture Theory", and others hone the ability to reasonably discuss complex and systemic aspects of a particular field of science or professional field both with specialists and non-specialists.

In order for students to become competent specialists who would be able to independently work in different fields of communication and would know the specificity of different media, the mastering of skills that are included in the fourth (KMM-4) and fifth (KMM-5) learning outcome is expected. In other words, the ability to independently advance the improvement of one's competences and specialisation must be ensured in the study courses "Public Relations Management Models", "Advertising in Mass Communication Processes", "Brand Management: Theory and Practice", "Journalism: Modern Processes and Challenges", "Photography", "Film Language", and others, as well as in study courses ensuring an overview of contexts and principles, for example, "International Relations and Intercultural Communication", "Communication Policy in the European Union", "Communication Psychology and Pedagogics", and others. In order to constantly take up the leadership of staff in the field of communication, it is necessary to pay more attention to it in the study courses "Ethics in Communication and Public Relations: Concepts and Ongoing Challenges", "Mass Communication and Sociology of Culture", "Communication Policy in the European Union", and others, but primarily in the study courses "Media Economy and Management" and "Communication Psychology and Pedagogics".

The last two study courses are important for honing other abilities as well – another group of learning outcomes is oriented towards the skill and competence to work independently also as entrepreneurs. The seventh (KMM-7) and eighth (KMM-8) learning outcomes relate to this group of learning outcomes. That is, in order to be able to take up leadership by also independently creating sustainable entrepreneurship and managing innovation process, not only "Media Economy and Management" and "Communication Psychology and Pedagogics" have to be mastered but also specific fields, such as advertisement, public relations, and brand management (see respective courses included in the table of the previous chapter). This is brought to attention from the very first day of studies when at the beginning of the curriculum in the study course "Analysis of Communication Situations" students analyse practical examples by understanding aspects of organisation management in the analysis of communication problems as well. This study course is crucial to mastering a competence that would later allow new specialists to identify in practice, critically analyse, and to study in detail problems in different fields of communication. In addition to it, study courses; for example, "Integration of Micro and Macro Theories of Communication", "Theoretical Models of Communication", "Communication Psychology and Pedagogics", "Ethics in Communication and Public Relations: Concepts and Ongoing Challenges" also ensure this competence.

As previously mentioned, the development strategy of the study programme always takes into account the principle of competence intertwinement – namely, different kind of knowledge and skills are acquired in different study courses in different stages of the curriculum in order to ensure and strengthen stable competences necessary in research and professional activity.

After evaluating the harmonisation of aims and learning outcomes with learning outcomes of study courses, it must be concluded that such harmonisation has been achieved in the study programme and in general all study courses of the study programme form a part of learning outcomes necessary for the achievement of aims.

2.3. Assessment of the study implementation methods (including the evaluation methods) by providing the analysis of how the study implementation methods (including the evaluation methods) used in the study courses/ modules are selected, what they are, and how they contribute to the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study courses and the aims of the study programme. Provide an explanation of how the student-centred principles are taken into account in the implementation of the study process.

The principal forms of teaching in the study programme are lectures whose volume is around half of the total volume of classes and where in accordance with the study programme and the work programme of the study course learning material is outlined, whereas the other half is comprised of seminars and practical classes. Yet, the number of contact hours in Master's level study courses is considerably lower than the number of hours devoted to independent work. Therefore, students' independent work is of great significance. Alongside mastering compulsory literature, which is controlled by way of essays, practical tasks, where acquired knowledge must be used, and evaluation of answers in seminars, creation of one or several reports or development of research projects is intended as part of every study course.

The following study methods are used in the study programme: concretisation of acquired theoretical and practical knowledge in seminars; discussions, tests, and test work; creation of reports, individual and group projects. In addition to that, students go on field trips to media organisations, museums, and places where communication is implemented (for example, in study course "Brand Management: Theory and Practice" students study brands in places of sale) or information is aggregated (such as museums, exhibitions, libraries) where some seminar classes and discussions are held. In some study courses at the centre of which lies practical work (for example, in many C part study courses "Photography", "Film Language", "Radio Communication"), students work outside the university by mastering media technologies and software for the implementation of a particular project.

Overall, a great deal of attention is paid to the independent work of students which is directed towards mastering and analysing scientific literature, acquisition and analysis of empirical material, use of scientific research methods, preparation and presentation of reports and individual projects.

The aim of lecturers is to aid students in organising individual work, providing advice where necessary, as well as stimulating debates and motivating the selection of research directions. This is why each study module provides five hours of consultations; however, lecturers are available to students outside the consultation time as well.

Students and lecturers can also communicate via e-mail, since with the help of Internet students can receive learning materials, send their lecturers assignments (reports, and others) intended as part of a study course, as well as can find out notes and evaluation given by a lecturer.

A detailed description is prepared for each study course where details on classroom topics, lecturer's requirements, compulsory literature, topics for reports and projects are provided. In order to facilitate the acquisition of material, students are offered electronic copies of compulsory literature materials that the student can print or use in an electronic format. The volume of compulsory literature is around 500-800 pages per each study course.

Study process is implemented mostly as interactive lectures, practical interactive classes or seminars and independent work of students. Both in lectures and in classes all previously described advanced technologies available at RSU are used.

During their studies at RSU, students have a possibility to ask questions they are interested in, to engage in discussions with lecturers and study colleagues. Problem-centred teaching strategies are used in studies. All additional study materials are freely available to the students in the e-study environment. It also provides references to additional information sources for studying the specific issues, as well as materials for self-guided learning (for example, practical assignments that can be done at home with self-assessment algorithm).

Both formative and summative evaluation is used in studies. The formative evaluation takes place during everyday study process: by asking control questions to the students during the contact lessons, as well as by discussing the independent work of students that is practised during the study process. The summative evaluation takes place at the conclusion of each study course as a test or examination. Summative evaluation tests are organised in a written form (in paper format or electronically) or as oral discussions. At the conclusion of studies, the student selects a topic he or she is interested in and in cooperation with selected paper supervisor develops and defends the Bachelor's thesis.

The evaluation system for studies in the Master's study programme "Communication and Media Studies" is based on three fundamental principles – positive evaluation for mastering the study programme is to be acquired obligatorily; different forms of intermediate tests (test work, presentations, essays, etc.) and one form of final examination – exam – are used in all study courses; competences, skills, and abilities are tested in each subject, the acquired theoretical knowledge of which students are able to use in practice.

Evaluation system for each study course is indicated in the study course description. At the beginning of each module, students are informed about the evaluation criteria. The results are evaluated on a 10-mark scale, considering the mark of 4 (almost average) as the lowest evaluation for a pass. The final grade consists of the sum of all grades that the students receive for different activities during studies.

Acquisition of the study material is evaluated with the help of the following test forms:

- 1) attendance of lectures, seminars, and practical classes;
- 2) participation and the quality of answers in seminars, as well as passing test work and tests;
- 3) development and defence of theoretical report or empirical research;
- 4) examination.

During the mastering of study courses, each student can keep track of his or her grades in the e-study environment.

Teaching staff at the department follows the grades of the students; students are regularly informed about their average grade, the overall state of grades is discussed at least once during the semester with the management of the department and of the study programme meeting with students of each year of studies.

The studies in the programme are characterised by an individual attitude towards students, creative attitude, freedom of expression, and stimulation of academic ethics. Cases of plagiarism in students' papers are reviewed in a meeting of the Department of Communication Studies; a register of plagiarism has been introduced. In case of repeated intentional plagiarism, a student may be expelled without a right to renew the status of a student at the RSU.

As already mentioned, by the end of each academic year, students are asked to complete the evaluation survey in RSU e-environment, wherein they can express their opinion and provide proposals both regarding the content of the study course and the methods of implementation thereof, as well as competences and work style of the lecturers. Therefore, study courses are updated each year in accordance with the evaluation given by the students. Representatives of the students are also involved in faculty councils ensuring representation of their opinion in decision-making.

RSU exercises a student-centred education, providing that:

- independently learning student is at the centre of the study process;
- learning outcomes are clearly formulated and known, and the student studies to achieve them;
- students know and understand the learning outcomes defined for the study programme or course;
- evaluation of the student's achievements is formed in a way that it is possible to ensure whether and at what level the planned learning outcomes have been achieved;
- task of the teaching staff is to facilitate the studies of the student so that the student would achieve the set learning outcomes;
- it can be observed that the aggregate of outcomes of separate study courses forms the learning outcomes of the study programme.

Learning outcomes of the study programme are formulated in a student-centred way and they:

- establish a unified understanding for students and teaching staff regarding what is expected from the student at the end of the course or the programme;
- provide students with an opportunity to study more effectively, i.e., students clearly know what knowledge and skills they will obtain when they successfully complete the respective course. The students can also track what they have already learned and what they still have not learned, and what their progress is towards achieving the outcomes of the programme;
- present a tool for the teaching staff for organising the study process more effectively: lectures, seminars, group work, discussions, laboratory work, etc., by selecting topics and materials, as well as teaching strategies in accordance with the learning outcomes specified for the study course or study programme;
- create a mutual understanding between the teaching staff and colleagues regarding the achievement of which learning outcome the course is taken, and the respective learning method is selected;
- identify those areas where certain types of learning outcomes overlap or lack (by comparing courses and compliance thereof with the programme);
- aid the students in their choice on which courses to take in accordance with learning outcomes the student wishes to achieve;
- provide clear information for employers on knowledge and skills the students have obtained, as well as provide an opportunity to assess this knowledge and skills in accordance with the defined professional qualification.

The study implementation and assessment methods promote the achievement of learning outcomes and aims of the study programme.

The choice of study implementation forms and time in most cases is evaluated as successful in the present higher education market conditions. Evaluation methods are sufficiently diverse; however, their suitability needs to be repeatedly reviewed so that students would understand the usefulness of tests and their integration into the study process and real-life needs.

2.4. If the study programme entails a traineeship, provide the analysis and assessment of the relation between the tasks of the traineeship included in the study programme and the learning outcomes of the study programme. Specify how the higher education institution/ college supports the students within the study programme regarding the fulfilment of the tasks set for students during the traineeship.

Not applicable.

2.5. Analysis and assessment of the topics of the final theses of the students, their relevance in the respective field, including the labour market, and the evaluations of the final theses.

Thematic directions of students' Final papers are determined in relation to the development of the field and labour market and topics and specialisation directions of lecturers and professors of the department, as well as those of implemented projects. However, given that students select their topics independently and develop them together with heads of the study programme and research papers, Final papers may also be concerned with innovative topics and those that are different from previously mentioned ones.

Overall, thematic directions of Master's theses can be classified into four large blocks:

- analysis of media discourse and political discourse; incorporating parliamentary discourse, communication of public authorities with the public, and also spheres of journalism (for example, work on constructive journalism in 2019);
- analysis of public relations and integrated marketing communication;
- analysis of digitalisation, social media, and network;
- communication, society and culture, devoting special attention to matters and media literacy related to changes in the media environment; for example, in 2018, upon responding to the updating of media literacy matters in Latvia's media policy, two Master's theses on the matters of media literacy were defended.

Students receive grades for their Final papers by successfully defending it – presenting it and answering to the questions posed by the committee. It must be noted that many papers conducted by students during the period considered have been evaluated as excellent and with distinction, and are a valuable contribution to the development of communications science in Latvia, as well as they can be incorporated in the research result base of the department by increasing the expertise of RSU FC.

Students receive an assessment of the final paper by successfully defending it – by presenting and answering the questions of the commission. It should be noted that many of the students' papers at this stage are rated as excellent and outstanding and are a valuable contribution to the development of the communication science in Latvia, and they are included in the research base of the department, increasing the expertise of RSU Faculty of Communications. As the programme management and supervisors of the Master's theses work particularly to increase the motivation of students and the quality of the Master's theses. Overall quality of the Master's theses is not bad. In recent years, only about a quarter of the papers have been assessed below 7 (good); and only one paper has received the lowest possible positive assessment (4 – almost satisfactory). There have not been any papers assessed as unsatisfactory. Most often, about a quarter of all the defended papers were assessed as good (7) and very good (8). Such result was achieved through motivational and preparatory activities, including, in particular, the study course “Pro-Seminar for Development of Master's Thesis” which was designed to facilitate the drafting of the Final Paper, development of the concept and research design. Abstract of the Master's thesis is evaluated in the defence of abstracts; the first version of the paper is evaluated by the commission set up from the teaching staff of the Department of Communication Studies of RSU Faculty of Communication, that carefully assesses the quality of the paper and advises not to submit the paper if the quality of its

first version is not high enough. It should be noted that the majority of students who do not submit their paper on the recommendation of the commission, improve its quality and defend it in one of the following years.

After evaluating the topics of the Final papers, it must be noted that they are diverse, students often solve serious communication problems and do it at a very high quality, as a result often reaching valuable findings.

Annex 17.1 contains a table on the compliance of the study programme with the State education standard.

Annex 18.1 contains mapping of study courses for the achievement of learning outcomes of the study programme.

Annex 19 contains the plan of the study programme (for each type and form of implementation of the study programme).

Annex 20 contains descriptions of the study courses of the study programme.

2.6. Analysis and assessment of the outcomes of the surveys conducted among the students, graduates, and employers, and the use of these outcomes for the improvement of the content and quality of studies by providing the respective examples.

Management of the study programme highly values the analysis and assessment of the study process, its results, and the positive and negative aspects conducted by the students. Given that the Master's study programme "Communication and Media Studies" has relatively few students, it is possible to conduct qualitative research – in each year of studies at least three times the head of the study programme meets with students to evaluate the finished period of studies and to prepare for the following one, as well as to provide answers to students' questions and comments. Students systematically evaluate the study process in two quantitative surveys:

- 1) each study course is evaluated in detail in an anonymous survey at the conclusion of it;
- 2) the overall studies are evaluated in the graduates' survey.

These data are a basis for the management of the study programme and of the department in further development of the study programme and deficiency elimination; however, it must be noted that since there are relatively few students (for example, there were 6 graduates in 2017, and 3 of them in 2019) and often half of students and graduates participate in the surveys (even less than that in surveys at the end of courses), the quantitative data are carefully evaluated before taken into account.

Overall, the survey data indicate that the students of the study programme are mostly satisfied with the studies and with the choice of the study programme and the institution of higher education, although they mention that they expected a different level of teaching in some study courses. In particular, students are satisfied with the lecture plan and information on its availability, and also with the material and technical base. Students do not have specific complaints against particular elements of studies – both lectures and guest lectures are evaluated positively by the majority of students (although there is a major difference in the evaluation of guest lectures), as well as final assignments in the form of reports satisfy the students. Students have given a slightly less positive evaluation for seminars, consultations, and practical work that could also be connected

to deficiencies in evaluation. Students mentioned subjectivity and unclear criteria as deficiencies; therefore, attention should be paid to how a lecturer evaluates the performance of students not just at the end of a study course.

Students are notified by the assistant of RSU Department of Communication Studies and the head of the study programme on the necessity to fill in the evaluation surveys, and by the head of the study course on the evaluation of the study courses. However, even though the graduates normally answer the questions of the survey, evaluation of some study courses is not fully ensured. Conclusion: in future it must be achieved that heads of study courses more actively require students to evaluate their study courses.

The analysis of results takes place once a year by paying attention to established deficiencies. However, since the study programme has been evaluated positively and without always clarifying one's answers or providing one's suggestions and with little evaluation of study courses, the head of the study programme receives more information on the evaluation of studies, as well as changes to be made therein from discussions with the students involved in the study programme. In the discussions, a great deal of attention is paid specifically to the evaluation of the course content, study placement, coursework and of the style of the head of the study course. Given that the Master's study programme has relatively few students, it is specifically this kind of qualitative in-depth information that gives a more precise and constructive idea of the programme and the desires of students. The obtained information is regularly discussed with the head of the study programme, head of the department and lecturers in whose work deficiencies have been found. This is done with an aim to qualitatively improve the study process – content, planning, methods, including evaluation methods and type of examination, and in some cases even terminating cooperation with lecturers who have been under particular criticism. The study course "Theories of New Media and Internet" serves as an example where a lecturer was substituted after this kind of criticism was expressed.

Feedback on students' comments is given in parallel with the study process, but particularly during the mentioned meeting times where improvements are discussed, suggestions are considered and the implemented and intended improvements are made known.

The survey of employers regarding the correspondence of the learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competence) of the study programme to the needs of the labour market is conducted within the framework of the study direction. Employers in principle highly value the opportunities of the labour market to involve modern and high-quality information and communication professionals, however, they require closer link between studies and the practice. Their suggestion is to invite successful professionals of the sector to teach at the University; to teach students to work with modern technologies and applications and to find the possibility for training of teaching staff in enterprises. It should be noted that the programme management is aware of these challenges and follow these recommendations in its day-to-day work, but due to the changing and diverse environment of the information and communication sector, it is not always possible to ensure detailed specialization. The advantage of the programme that focus to a large extent on a leader, a professional with broad outlook and in-depth views, is in its versatility and openness to the new. The Master's study programme does not include placement in companies as it has been planned as an academic study programme since its introduction. However, the management of the programme is always looking for ways to attract professionals to work in teaching – there are also requirements from employers to recruit practitioners of the sector. Solutions are being sought for this task, because we are facing challenges that are common in higher education of Latvia in general: 1) many successful entrepreneurs in the sector and practitioners do not have appropriate education to work in the academic study programme, 2) the remuneration offered by the university to high-class professionals is not competitive, 3) employers often contradict themselves: on the one hand, they

claim that university students and lecturers should learn the specific nature of the sector and the latest practices and methods directly in the companies, on the other hand, they are not willing to offer their own resources (time, technologies, knowledge) for training. Therefore, the debate between entrepreneurs of the sector, professional associations and universities on solutions to these contradictions should be encouraged, assuming that closer cooperation requires specific planning, agreeing on goals and expectations and restructuring of the work organisation for collaborative and sustainable development. In the meantime, it can be considered that the most important appraisal of RSU study programme “Communication and Media Studies” by employers stems from the practice, as mentioned above:

- 1) almost all students involved in the study programme work in the field, meaning that the content of education which the programme provides and learning outcomes are highly valued by field specialists and the management;
- 2) many students and graduates of the study programme are heads of media and research enterprises and of communication departments.
- 3) just after studies in the Master's degree study programme, professionals often become lecturers in the study programme, continuing their studies in RSU Department of Doctoral Studies.

Good examples are students Aija Kažoka (long-time editor of journal “Medicus Bonus”) and Diāna Kalniņa (project director of sociological research company SKDS) of the RSU doctoral study programme “Communication Culture and Multimedia” who without abandoning their work in the field have begun lecturing at RSU.

Overall, student, graduate, and employer surveys are an important tool for ensuring quality of the study programme, which is why it is necessary to achieve a higher proportion of students involved in the evaluation.

2.7. Provide the assessment of the options of the incoming and outgoing mobility of the students, the dynamics of the number of the used opportunities, and the recognition of the study courses acquired during the mobility.

In the study programme “Communication and Media Studies”, once every year students have an opportunity to participate in a competition so that by using ERASMUS scholarship as part of their studies they would leave to study at a university abroad with which RSU has concluded ERASMUS exchange agreements in the field of communication. The management of the study programme supports such opportunity and after evaluating the student's plan at an institution of higher education abroad according to quality, volume, content and learning outcomes achieved, it includes what a student has acquired during studies abroad in the student's curriculum. Given that the duration of Master's studies is only two years and that in addition to their studies the students also have professional obligations and/or due to family reasons they do not want to go abroad for a longer period of time, thus far a relatively small number of students have used this opportunity – overall, two students have been studying at the University of Akureyri, Iceland, and at the Jönköping University, Sweden, since 2012.

Recognition of study courses is subject to careful individual assessment and in accordance with the procedures at RSU. That is, since the courses learned at foreign universities in most cases differ in content and volume from those study courses of the Master's degree study programme “Communication and Media Studies” of the Department of Communication Studies at RSU Faculty

of Communications, the management of the programme has carefully assessed the content and extent of each study course learned at a foreign institution of higher education and, considering the interests and needs of the student (mainly in the context of the selected topic for the Master's thesis), a list of courses to be learned within mobility is compiled in such a way that the learning outcomes obtained in the study courses could be comparable to the learning outcomes of the courses to be studied in RSU programme. Flexibility is provided by the relatively large number of elective courses following the first semester of study.

The management of the study programme actively pursues different types and levels of mobility opportunities as part of the internationalisation of education area by integrating what has been acquired during the mobility into the curriculum. Successful cooperation has been developed with the University of Akureyri. For example, in the spring of 2018, a group of students from Iceland stayed at RSU, while first-year students of the Master's study programme went to Iceland in order to fulfil part of study tasks of the 2019 spring semester with the support of NORDPLUS where they also attended many lectures as part of the study course "International Relations and Intercultural Communication" lectured by Markus Meckl.

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme)

3.1. Assessment of the compliance of the resources and provision (study provision, scientific support (if applicable), informative provision (including libraries), material and technical provision, and financial provision) with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the learning outcomes to be achieved by providing the respective examples. Whilst carrying out the assessment, it is possible to refer to the information provided for in the criteria set forth in Part II, Chapter 3, sub-paragraphs 3.1 to 3.3.

Study facilities – library, classrooms, technical support, computers, cameras, Internet connection – created for the study direction are available for ensuring the implementation of the study programme. Specific educational resources are almost fully ensured in the e-studies, including course descriptions, tasks and tests, if there are any, as well as compulsory literature. Academic literature is mostly provided by using e-books and e-journals or by scanning the most important text fragments and uploading them to the e-studies or also by using Internet sources with an aim to provide students with the opportunity to use e-devices for reading purposes (even though in some cases the lecturers specifically invite students to work in the library). When beginning the implementation of each study course, the lecturer rearranges the e-studies together with the assistant of department by updating the tasks and the list of literature. The lecturer continues to work in the e-studies environment during the implementation of the study course by also using it for communication with students, announcements, and answers to questions. In order to ensure a deeper integration of e-environment into the study process, there is an intention to develop a variety of tools offered in the *moodle* environment by diversifying tasks and forms of communication.

3.2. Assessment of the study provision and scientific support, including the resources provided within the cooperation with other science institutes and institutions of higher education (applicable to the doctoral study programmes).

Not applicable.

III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (4. Teaching Staff)

4.1. Analysis and assessment of the changes to the composition of the teaching staff over the reporting period and their impact on the study quality.

Lecturers, whose qualification and abilities are on a high level and have been evaluated during a long cooperation period, are involved in the implementation of the study direction and programmes; therefore, changes in the teaching staff are insignificant – only four study courses have experienced a change of lecturers. In study courses “Theories of New Media and Internet”, “Culture Theory”, “Mass Communication and Sociology of Culture”, “Communication Psychology and Pedagogics” it has happened with an aim to replace lecturers who work on a contractual basis with RSU FC’s elected teaching staff as heads of study courses who due to the specificity of certain content segments invite visiting lecturers and lecturers of study courses. The list of teaching staff involved in the study programme has increased by also introducing new study courses in the study programme; for example, lecturers from the department, who represent specific fields of media competence, are involved in the implementation of the study programme – *Dr. art.* Dita Rietuma (“Film Language”), *Dr. paed.* Alnis Stakle (“Photography”). Likewise, it is important to vary the perspective by inviting representatives of other sciences for the purpose of ensuring interdisciplinarity in the study programme. A good example is cooperation with RSU Department of Psychosomatic Medicine and Psychotherapy whose representative *Dr. Artūrs Utināns* teaches study course “Consciousness, Behaviour, and Culture”. An important aim put forward by the management of the study programme in the context internationalisation policy of Europe’s higher education is the involvement of foreign lecturers. In the reporting period, not only many foreign experts and visiting lecturers in the field of communication (Prof. Päivi Maijanen-Kyläheiko , Prof. Deimantas Jastramskis) or visiting teaching staff (*Dr. Rosario Napolitano*, Prof. Tyrone Shaw, Prof. Sigrún Stefánsdóttir) were involved but also a sustained cooperation with foreign lecturers has been established by entrusting them with the development and teaching of some study courses each year (Prof. Markus Meckl manages the study course “International Relations and Intercultural Communication” and Prof. Michael Roither – “Social Media and Crisis Communication” which is included in the study programme’s reporting period in 2014). The management of the study programme considers this strategy to be a significant guarantee of quality and will continue to implement it in future.

Lecturers who work on a permanent basis at the university are obliged to participate in research activities which are regulated in the job descriptions of employees. According to the type of academic position, the following proportion of employee’s duties and responsibilities in scientific and research activities has been established:

- 30 % of the working hours the assistant spends doing scientific and research work;
- 15 % of the working hours the lecturer spends doing scientific and research work;
- 20 % of the working hours the assistant professor, associate professor, professor spend doing scientific and research work.

Distribution of responsibility in the structural unit can be changed by the head of the structural unit by agreeing with the employee in accordance with the plan of pedagogical work and projects to be implemented.

Results of scientific activities of the academic staff are aggregated once a year by including them in the scientific activity report, as well as for some groups of the staff they are related to the principles of remuneration and motivation. The achievements of lecturers are included in their CVs (see Annex 6.2).

RSU constantly plans and implements activities that are aimed at the motivation of academic staff to participate in high-level scientific and research work, particularly by associate professors and professors (aim to reach the volume of scientific work amounting to 60 % of the working hours) that will promote involvement of new specialists in field research, as well as will contribute to the overall development of science on a State and international level.

To sum up the changes to the constitution of the teaching staff, it must be stated that the qualification of lecturers is very high and complies with the requirements set out in regulatory enactments. Changes to the constitution of the teaching staff are made so that they would not decrease the mentioned quality. Primarily, the changes reflect the willingness to strengthen this situation also in the context of interdisciplinarity and internationalisation of higher education.

4.2. Assessment of the compliance of the qualification of the teaching staff members (academic staff members, visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers, and visiting assistants) involved in the implementation of the study programme with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the provisions set out in the respective regulatory enactments. Provide information on how the qualification of the teaching staff members contributes to the achievement of the learning outcomes.

The qualification of teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programme complies with the implementation conditions and requirements of regulatory enactments, and ensures the achievement of aims of the study programme and respective study courses, as well as learning outcomes. When the academic Master's study programme "Communication and Media Studies" was already in the process of creation, research directions and fields of expertise of the lecturers at the department were taken into account. Therefore, the majority of lecturers participating in the implementation of the study programme are employees at the RSU Faculty of Communication.

All professors at the RSU Faculty of Communication – Anda Rožukalne, Deniss Hanovs, Sergejs Kruks – and Professor Vija Sīle from RSU Department of Humanities, who are recognised experts in communication science and leading researchers in fields whose related study courses are taught at the Master's study programme "Communication and Media Studies", participate in the implementation of the study programme. Therefore, it is guaranteed that the studies will provide in-depth and extended knowledge and understanding complying with the latest findings (KMM-1) and will also encourage students to be involved in research by being able to use theories and methods

tested in the communication science by conducting independent research (KMM-2), and will develop the ability for students to analyse and explain (KMM-3). The achievement of these learning outcomes also guarantees participation in the implementation of studies of such well-known and experienced specialists in social sciences of Latvia as Associate Professor Ritma Rungule, Acting Assistant Professor Anda Laķe, Assistant Professor Agita Lūse and Assistant Professor Ivans Jānis Mihailovs. Whereas the head of the study programme *Dr. philol.* Ilva Skulte specialises in teaching theoretical courses and as an important goal of her study courses puts forward not only creation of theoretical understanding in her study courses but also developing the skill of situation modelling, analysis of impact factors and of forecasting (KMM-6). RSU doctoral students, who are also lecturers for a long time and are known in their field segments not only as researchers but also as successful and convincing practitioners, are involved in teaching as well; for example, lecturers R. Siliņa, V. Savicka, and N. Kozlovs are able to ensure both the knowledge to creatively and flexibly work in the selected specialisation (KMM-4) and the skill to identify, formulate, and analyse problems in these fields (KMM-8). For the purpose of mastering specialisation in different directions (KMM-4), other specialists at the faculty are invited – Assistant Professor Dita Rietuma who is a recognised expert in the field of cinema, or Assistant Professor Alnis Stakle who is a recognised practitioner in the field of photography. Reputation, experience, and expertise of the mentioned lecturers is treated as an opportunity to stimulate students' readiness to create their enterprises (KMM-4) in an innovative and modern manner (KMM-7).

An important review of communication policy and international and intercultural aspects, as well as of those fields of expertise that in terms of communication, problem modelling, explanation, and also of practical work nowadays are very topical but where the teaching staff of the Department of RSU Communication Studies lacks expertise, is provided by invited specialists to the study programme from different related fields; for example, Lecturer Andris Grafs or communication psychology researcher and project manager Ieva Pakse. In this regard, foreign lecturers need to be highlighted who both provide students with a different view on what is happening in Latvia with an international context and offer a valuable contribution to the content of the study programme in fields that are less developed in the higher education of Latvia. As already mentioned, visiting professors who read guest lectures need to be mentioned here, for example, Prof. M. Meckl and Prof. M. Roither, also visiting lecturers who for the purpose of exchange of experience are invited to teaching specific study courses, and also Latvia's field specialists and foreign experts whose valuable lectures and seminars help gaining a multi-faceted view on problems, a more precise focus and detailed overview in specialisation and the ability to find and solve problems in real life examples.

After assessing the constitution of the teaching staff of the study programme and its development strategy, it must be acknowledged that overall the use of intellectual and professional potential of employees at the department and faculty has been successful where possible, as well as by raising Erasmus and other project funds to find solutions for renewing and improving study courses by involving foreign specialists which ensures flexibility and "a view from the side". Much work has been done for the purpose of involving those employed in the field of media and communication in the study process. However, the number of students in the study programme compels to adhere to a strictly economic mode and the offered load/rate plan to the potential lecturers is unacceptable; therefore, the management of the study programme has to find solutions for involving lecturers with particular specialisation in the teaching staff of the study programme.

All teaching staff engaged in the study programme as lecturers or visiting lecturers have at least a master's degree in the related science sector (see Annex 24.7. regarding the analysis of the academic staff involved in the implementation of the study programme). Most of the lecturers are professionals in their field (for example, the lecturer Ruta Siliņa is the Head of the Communication

and International Cooperation Department of the Office of the Ombudsman of the Republic of Latvia, the lecturer Vita Savicka herself has developed and still runs a public relations company concurrently with her work at the University; while the representatives of the sector are regularly invited to lecture in the study courses “Analysis of Communication Situations” and “Media Economy and Management”, such as Ingus Berzins, editor-in-chief of the portal DELFI, etc.).

On the other hand, the academic and scientific potential of the teaching staff of the programme continues to be strengthened. Several lecturers of the programme, such as the lecturer Ruta Siliņa, the lecturer Normunds Kozlovs and the lecturer Vita Savicka have recently studied at RSU Department of Doctoral Studies, while others have gained a senior academic position, for example, Anda Rožukalne, the Dean of RSU Faculty of Communication was elected a professor. Scientific and academic degrees are also taken into account when recruiting freelance teachers and inviting guest lecturers, most of them have a PhD or they are professionals of their field with a Master's degree (practitioners) - only three of the lecturers teaching in the programme have not obtained a PhD or do not plan to study for a PhD.

4.3. Information on the number of the scientific publications of the academic staff members, involved in the implementation of the doctoral study programme, as published during the reporting period by listing the most significant publications published in Scopus or WoS CC indexed journals. As for the social sciences, humanitarian sciences, and the science of art, the scientific publications published in ERIH+ indexed journals may be additionally specified (if applicable).

Not applicable.

4.4. Information on the participation of the academic staff, involved in the implementation of the doctoral study programme, in scientific projects as project managers or prime contractors/ subproject managers/ leading researchers by specifying the name of the relevant project, as well as the source and the amount of the funding. Provide information on the reporting period (if applicable).

Not applicable.

4.5. Provide examples of the involvement of the academic staff in the scientific research and/or artistic creation activities both at national and at international level (in the fields related to the content of the study programme), as well as the use of the obtained information in the study process.

As indicated in Chapter 4.1, all lecturers at the department and all (except for invited lecturers who are highly-qualified with long and significant expertise in the respective professional field) lecturers involved in the implementation of the study programme in addition to pedagogical work also carry

out scientific research work. Findings from this work and examples from studies enrich the content of the study courses by ensuring its topicality and similarity with practice. For example, already at the beginning of the study course “Analysis of Communication Situations”, each lecturer involved presents results of his or her topical research by involving students in co-research with the help of focused tasks. Since study methods emphasise the principle of cooperation, lecturers tend to rely on what has been verified in their research and examples therein. Lecturers actively involve students in research work also as part of different projects implemented at the department. Topics of the Master’s theses are often connected to topics of research projects implemented by lecturers at the department. A good example is the NRP project ECOSOC-LV 5.2.5. “Reflections on values and conduct as a result of socio-economic changes” in whose implementation A. Rožukalne, I. Skulte and N. Kozlovs participated, whereas A. Rožukalne, K. Sedlenieks, I. Skulte, V. Sīlis and other lecturers of the study programme and four students of the study programme, who were actively involved in research work, participated in RSU Faculty of Communication’s and National Research Programme’s organised new Master’s student scientific conference on 22 April 2015.

See Annex 6.4 “Summary of publications and experience in the field of the teaching staff”.

Generally speaking, the majority of lecturers of the study programme constantly conduct scientific research work by participating in the implementation of department’s projects as well in order to ensure open space and continuity for research in future.

4.6. Assessment of the cooperation between the teaching staff members by specifying the mechanisms used to promote the cooperation and ensure the interrelation between the study courses/ modules. Specify also the proportion of the number of the students and the teaching staff within the study programme (at the moment of the submission of the Self-Assessment Report).

Lecturers employed in the study programme are invited to participate in constant critically analytical evaluation of study work and in discussions on it. Results of student surveys are mutually discussed and invited independent lecturers are provided with a brief evaluation and recommendations. In accordance with the university’s strategy, lesson observation takes place regularly. Therefore, changes and improvements in the operation of the study programme are made directly on the basis of collegial discussions, evaluation, and results of discussions. Part of study courses are implemented by means of direct cooperation between several lecturers and also inviting visiting lecturers; the study courses ensure several perspectives and interpretations with regard to content to be acquired. An interesting collective work is, for example, study course “Mass Communication and Sociology of Culture” implemented by Lecturer N. Kozlovs and Visiting Assistant Professor R. Napolitano where both of them read lectures separately and together and evaluate presentations of students’ Final papers. Likewise, a lot of visiting lecturers are traditionally invited to Prof. Anda Rožkalne’s managed study course “Media Economy and Management”. The variety of opinions and perspectives that lecturers with experience and knowledge in slightly different fields offer in one study course is very important to the development strategy of the study programme. One of the best examples is study course “Analysis of Communication Situations” – the first course in the study process being introduced to students in the field of communication. By additionally inviting other visiting lecturers each year, this study course is implemented by four lecturers of the Department of Communication Studies – head of the study programme I. Skulte, N. Kozlovs, A. Rožukalne, and S. Kruks.

As already mentioned, the number of students in the programme is relatively small – on average, in one year of studies, there are 15–25 students. The number of involved RSU lecturers is similar; however, this proportion is not stable. In such circumstances, the strategy of the management of the study programme is to reduce the number of local lecturers involved where possible by increasing their workload in the study programme and to leave variation possibilities for invited lecturers to consider by carefully evaluating each case in order to gain more experience in staff management matters with an economic thinking model.

Annexes

III. Description of the Study Programme - 1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme		
Compliance of the joint study programme with the provisions of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (table)		
Statistics on the students over the reporting period	16_pielik_KMM_Statistika_eng.pdf	16_pielik_KMM_Statistika_lv.pdf
III. Description of the Study Programme - 2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof		
Compliance of the study programme with the State Education Standard	17.1_pielik_Atbiest_Izgl_Stand_eng.pdf	17.1_pielik_Atbiest_Izgl_Stand_lv.pdf
Compliance of the qualification to be acquired upon completion of the study programme with the professional standard (if applicable)		
Compliance of the study programme with the specific regulatory framework applicable to the relevant field (if applicable)		
Mapping of the study courses/ modules for the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study programme	18.1_pielik_StK_StRt_kartejums_eng.pdf	18.1_pielik_StK_StRt_kartejums_lv.pdf
Curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme)	19_pielik_KM_planojums_ENG.pdf	19_pielik_KM_planojums_LV.pdf
Descriptions of the study courses/ modules	20_pielik_KMM_StK_ENG.pdf	20_pielik_KMM_StK_LV.pdf
Description of the Study Direction - Other mandatory attachments		
Sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme.	24-1_AMSP_KMM_diploms_gatavs_ENG.pdf	24-1_AMSP_KMM_diploms_gatavs.pdf
Description of the Study Programme - Other mandatory attachments		
Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college will provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme or at another higher education institution/ college (a contract with another accredited higher education institution/ college), in case the implementation of the study programme is discontinued	24.2_pielikums_Apliecinajums_par_citu_StP_IKZ_parakstits_tulk.pdf	24.2_pielikums_Apliecinajums_par_citu_StP_IKZ_parakstits.pdf
Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college guarantees to the students a compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the higher education institution/ college (actions or failure to act) and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme	24.3_pielikums_Apliecinajums_par_zaudejumiem_IKZ_parakstits_eng.pdf	24.3_pielikums_Apliecinajums_par_zaudejumiem_IKZ_parakstits.pdf
Confirmation of the higher education institution/ college that the teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language according to European language levels (see the levels under www.europass.lv), if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language.	24.5_pielik_Apliecin_anglu_val_StV_IKZ_parakstits_eng.pdf	24.5_pielik_Apliecin_anglu_val_StV_IKZ_parakstits.pdf
If the study programmes in the study direction subject to the assessment are doctoral study programmes, a confirmation that at least five teaching staff members with doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field or sub-field of science, in which the study programme has intended to award a scientific degree.		
If academic study programmes are implemented within the study direction, a document confirming that the academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the provisions set out in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause three of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education	24-7_pielik_apliecinajums_AMSP_KM_eng.pdf	24-7_pielik_apliecinajums_AMSP_KM_lv.pdf
Sample (or samples) of the study agreement	24.8_pielik_Studiju_lig_eng.pdf	24.8_pielik_Studiju_lig_lv.pdf
If academic study programmes for less than 250 full-time students are implemented within the study direction, the opinion of the Council for Higher Education shall be attached in compliance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.	24.9_pielik_AIP_atzinums_eng.pdf	24.9_pielik_AIP_atzinums_lv.pdf